



# **Colorado Academic Standards Review: Dance, Drama/Theatre, Music, and Visual Arts Final Report**

Prepared for the Colorado Department of Education by  
State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE)  
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## **State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education Review of Colorado Academic Standards**

### **Scope of Work**

#### ***Background***

Colorado is among the numerous states across the nation that are required to periodically examine the state's academic standards through peer review processes. "Pursuant to 22-7-1005(6), the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) must review and revise the Colorado Academic Standards every six years." According to the current cycle, the next review and revision process was to be completed on or before August 31, 2021. This endeavor was intended to ensure that the CDE standards are meeting the needs of today's students in a developmentally appropriate manner. This review process was also intended to provide a foundation, based on the consideration of experts in the field, to identify exemplary elements in the CDE standards and those elements in need of improvement. To assist with the department's creation of a new iteration of standards, the CDE engaged the services of the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE) to conduct an external review to benchmark the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) in Dance, Drama and Theatre Arts, Music, and Visual Arts against the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) and against other state and international arts standards as well.

#### ***Timeline, Deliverables, and Reviewers***

The SEADAE review team's examination of the CAS for the Arts was administered from July 6 through August 31, 2021. The SEADAE review team was composed of state education agency directors of arts education or former arts education directors. The review team's background and expertise appear in the next section of this report.

The findings and observations of the SEADAE team are found in this summary report. It compares the CAS for the Arts to the NCAS, New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Visual and Performing Arts, Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts, and the New South Wales K-12 Creative Arts Continuums, Learning Across the Curriculum/Arts, developed by the Board of Studies for the State of New South Wales (Australia).

#### ***Audience***

The identified audience for this report is the CDE staff. The potential for a more public readership also exists and therefore language choices, visual tools, and construction of the report offer a user-friendly option that is readable and easy to navigate.

#### ***Review Research Questions***

The two research questions driving the review were:

- To what extent do the Colorado Academic Standards for Dance, Drama/Theatre, Music, and Visual Art provide sufficient rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence to drive

the creation and implementation of robust PK-12 arts curricula, in a manner which is scalable and for which student growth can be measured?

- How do the Colorado Academic Standards for Dance, Drama/Theatre, Music, and Visual Art compare and contrast to other prototypical state, national, and international arts standards with respect to organizational frameworks and conceptual understandings?

Ultimately this review identifies aspects of the CAS for Dance, Music, Drama and Theatre Arts, and Visual Art that may require further refinement. This review also highlights components that, if retained, require modifications that support quality opportunities for learning in the arts. The review encompasses the artistic disciplines of dance, music, drama and theatre arts, and visual arts, and includes the following review components:

- an overview of the research methodology, benchmarking and data gathering processes, code of ethics, and rationale for the choice and use of referent standards
- standardized ratings as well as individual reviewer comments across all arts disciplines
- use of a consistent classification system with rankings of *Strong* (3), *Moderate* (2), *Weak* (1), or *Not Found* (0) with respect to:
  - rigor,
  - depth,
  - breadth, and
  - coherence
- findings, observations, and recommendations for future iterations of the CAS for the Arts
- references
- source documents that informed the analysis of CAS for the Arts

### ***Organization of the Report***

The structure of this report provides an in-depth look into each arts content area, highlighting the findings and observations found in each respective area. The report provides observations of the strengths of the current CAS for the Arts and identifies standards and indicators potentially in need of refinement. The narratives are supported by tables to further illustrate the strengths and challenges of the CAS for the Arts. Supporting documentation, appendices, a glossary, and references are also provided in the latter sections of this report.

### **Background of Expert Panel**

In 2016, the CDE solicited the services of SEADAE for the purpose of reviewing the CAS for the Arts. SEADAE consists of those persons in state education agencies charged with oversight of education policy and practice in the arts, including standards for Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts, and Media Arts. The organization is well known within the arts education field for its collective national impact of the work of its members. Moreover, the purpose of SEADAE is to support equitable access to quality, comprehensive, sequential, standards-based educational opportunities for learning in the arts for all PreK-20 students. For

the 2021 Colorado Standards Review Process, the CDE contracted SEADAE because of their expertise in the field.

The panelists that contributed to this report are either current or former state education agency arts education consultants and SEADAE members. They have a wide variety of backgrounds in the arts and arts education, including experience as K-16 educators, independent artists, coaches, administrators, professional development facilitators, and mentors. All the content reviewers serve or have served in leadership positions for SEADAE, including three past presidents. Each reviewer provides an expanded perspective on the state, national, and international arts education landscape. The team's diversity of experience served them well when evaluating the strengths and challenges of CAS, and while cross indexing opportunities for learning between CAS and other sets of state, national, and international arts standards. The observations and recommendations for refinement offered in this report to the CAS program staff provide valuable insights that inform the next iteration of the CAS for the Arts. The SEADAE team included:

**Content Expert Reviewers:**

Project Co- Lead - Dr. Julie A. Palkowski

Project Co- Lead - Dr. Dale Schmid

Dance Reviewer - Sayward Grindley, M.F.A

Drama/Theatre Reviewer - Emily Atkinson, M.A.Ed.

Music Reviewer - Jason Anderson, M.M.

Visual Arts Reviewer - Joyce Huser, M.Ed.

Editor: Lana Hallmark, M.Ed.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Approach***

The standards review involved the same protocols as the 2016 Colorado Arts Standards Review administered by SEADAE for the CDE. The approach is informed by two components including:

- a review of the internal quality of the CAS in Dance, Drama and Theatre Arts, Music, and Visual Arts with respect to the degree of rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence of the standards; and
- a comparison of the CAS for the Arts with external referent examples, using *Very Similar*, *Similar*, *Dissimilar* or *Very Dissimilar* to express the degree of alignment of the organizational structure and content expectations for arts literacy and fluency between the CAS for the Arts and the external referent examples.

The benchmarking process was structured to respond to the two research questions identified previously by using common definitions, domain specific feedback, and common frequently observed indicators as criteria for ranking the rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence of the CAS. The resultant findings and observations extrapolated from data points are meant to inform next steps in refining state arts education standards. Tables are provided throughout the report

to enable the reader to visualize the data points and composite averages of grade band levels for each standard and content area.

### ***Data Gathering Plan***

A cross comparison index tool developed by the SEADAE review team in 2016 was used again to gather information across the four arts disciplines. The CAS grade level expectations (GLEs) were ranked according to their degree of rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence at individual grade level indicators and then evaluated. Composite averages were collated for each standard by grade bands: Grades K-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, High School (HS) Fundamental, and HS Extended. These averages enabled identification of potential gaps and strengths. The relative degrees of rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence of the GLE and GLE grade band clusters were ranked numerically with 3 points for *Strong*; 2 for *Moderate*; 1 for *Weak*; and 0 points for *Not Found* if rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence were not explicitly evident. These numeric values were supported by comments drawn from a pull-down menu, and in a few cases additional comments were added by the content reviewer. Narratives and tables for each content area are embedded within the report to further describe the overall features of the Colorado and referent standards. Additionally, steps were taken to increase inter-rater reliability across arts disciplines among the SEADAE review team members. These steps helped ensure internal consistency.

The operational definitions of *rigor*, *depth*, *breadth*, and *coherence* used for the purposes of benchmarking the CAS standards are defined below. The questions used by the review team to guide the evaluation of the CAS are listed below the definitions. This approach to benchmarking was inspired by the College Board and offers commonalities across artistic disciplines in the reading of the report.

### ***Internal Quality Review Criteria***

The same categories defined below were applied to all CAS arts standards - Dance, Drama and Theatre Arts, Music, and Visual Arts. The four artistic disciplines also shared the same guiding questions.

**Rigor.** For the purposes of this study, the following definition of *rigor* applies to all art forms:

“The term rigor is widely used by educators to describe instruction, schoolwork, learning experiences, and educational expectations that are academically, intellectually, and personally challenging. Rigorous learning experiences, for example, help students understand knowledge and concepts that are complex, ambiguous, or contentious, and they help students acquire skills that can be applied in a variety of educational, career, and civic contexts throughout their lives.” ([Ed Glossary](#))

The considerations guiding the ranking of rigor include whether or to what extent the standard:

- clearly offers active language for learners to demonstrate declarative and procedural knowledge and skills in the arts content area.
- is developmentally appropriate to the grade level for which it is targeted.
- enables and encourages students to build upon prior knowledge and transfer or adapt specific grade level appropriate constructs to new situations, thereby fostering creativity and adaptive innovation.
- promulgates arts literacy and fluency appropriate to the age of the student.

**Depth.** For the purposes of this study, the following definition of *depth* applies to all art forms:

“Depth is widely used by educators to describe robust, well-integrated understandings of fundamental concepts essential to the attainment of literacy and fluency in an arts discipline. Courses of sufficient 'depth' include developmentally appropriate levels of investigation that reinforce and revisit core concepts and that provide a firm foundation for students to learn and understand more advanced concepts and transfer their knowledge in other contexts.”

(Adapted from [College Board Science Framework](#))

The considerations guiding the ranking of depth include whether or to what extent the standard:

- states a learning objective that drives teaching and learning.
- supports a deep investigation of developmentally appropriate literacy and fluency in the arts content area explored.
- reinforces and revisits core concepts and demands transfer of prior knowledge to understand more advanced concepts.
- promotes inquiry-based learning.
- targets specific learning objectives, which can be observed and assessed for levels of student mastery of content and learning goals.

**Breadth.** For the purposes of this study, the following definition of *breadth* applies to all art forms:

“The term *breadth of standards* is being defined for the purposes of this review to mean a coherently scaffolded and sequenced set of standards, in which essential content is explored through a wide array of interrelated ideas, facts, and perspectives.” (SEADAE review team definition)

The considerations guiding the ranking of breadth include whether or to what extent the standard set provides:

- a logical sequence to build learner knowledge and skills.
- interrelated ideas, facts, and perspectives.
- a continuum of knowledge and skills necessary for progressively sophisticated levels of arts literacy and fluency without gaps or redundancies.

**Coherence.** For the purposes of this study, the following definition for *coherence* applies to all art forms:

“Learning standards can promote greater academic and instructional coherence, or ‘alignment’ within a school or education system. Because standards are carefully mapped out and sequenced, they can help schools and teachers avoid redundancy or unnecessary repetition, while also creating a progression of learning in which each lesson builds on previous lessons, moving students from simpler concepts to more complex and challenging concepts, from lower-level thinking to higher-level thinking, or from less-sophisticated skills to more-sophisticated skills as they progress through their education. For a related discussion, see coherent curriculum.” ([Ed Glossary](#))

The considerations guiding the ranking of coherence include whether or to what extent the standard:

- creates a systematic, intentional progression of learning that builds on previous standards, which offers students a logical pathway for learning enabling them to master simple and increasingly complex concepts.
- exhibits parallel construction similar to that of other standards and concurrent knowledge and skills demanded for mastery of the standard.
- necessitates higher-level thinking and ensures that demand increases in cognitive ability for content mastery.

Each category was evaluated using the following ratings: *Strong* (3), *Moderate* (2), *Weak* (1), or *Not Found* (0). Samples of all components of the internal review aide in calling attention to unique or notable findings. These samples include the numeric ratings for rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence (3, 2, 1, or 0); the pull-down comments; and additional comments provided by the reviewer. The samples are embedded in tables and narratives for each of the CAS arts disciplines examined for this report. Additional, more detailed information can be found within the appendices.

### ***External Review Criteria***

Resources gathered for this report beyond the Colorado foundational arts standards documents include two state standard sets (New Jersey, Delaware), one set of national standards (the National Core Arts Standards), and one set of international standards (the State of New South Wales in Australia). The referent example standard sets were selected based on the following factors:

- time of adoption/adaptation
- relevance and coherence of the content area learning objectives
- charge from the Colorado staff
- consistent use by other experts in the field
- embedded use of backwards design (New Jersey and Delaware)
- intersections between the arts and social emotional learning (New Jersey)
- use of *I Can* statements (Delaware)



The referent examples were initially scanned for structural, organizational, and guiding elements and then cross-indexed to each of Colorado's standards, comparing the organizational and conceptual frameworks for each of the sets of standards, and using the lenses of rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence as previously described. This offered a consistent tool for the review of standards that also provided a mechanism to identify unique aspects of various sets of standards for future consideration when developing, reframing, or redefining standards. Further background information about the CAS and referent standards is provided in the External Referents section of this report.

The documents utilized for this study were readily available to the review panel via the internet and offered a mechanism for the team to deepen their investigation into the CAS through exploration of additional links, references, and resources highlighted in the CAS and referent standard sets and accompanying materials. Elements identified for comparison between each referent example and the CAS for the Arts include the following items:

- purpose statement for the standards
- topical organization of the academic content areas
- standards themselves
- identification of grade levels
- grade-level expectations
- *Students Will/By End of* statements
- high school expectations
- additional features

When comparing the CAS to the referent standards, the reviewers rated the latter as *Very Similar, Similar, Dissimilar, or Very Dissimilar* to the CAS for the Arts. The similarities and dissimilarities among the standards are described and appear as graphic organizers in the alignment study tables in the content narrative section of this report.

### ***Code of Ethics***

The reviewers that contributed to this report are arts education professionals who are either current or past State Education Agency visual and performing arts education consultants at various state departments of education throughout the country. Their conduct in this work follows the five principles of the [American Educational Research Association Code of Ethics](#), which include:

- **Professional Competence.** The review team consists of experts in the field who also tap into the expertise of others to better round out the information collected for the good of the report. They continue to seek additional resources and voices from the field to inform the work being conducted, not only for the client Colorado, but also for the broad scope of the arts education field.
- **Integrity.** The review team conducts themselves through honest and respectful conversations and work to further educational research, practice, and service.

- **Professional, Scientific, and Scholarly Responsibility.** The reviewers conduct their work both collaboratively within the team, individually, and as needed with the field to share their work, ideas, and research methods to best inform the field and identify refinements of the work to enhance the study.
- **Respect for People’s Rights, Dignity, and Diversity.** As members of SEADAE and their respective state education Agencies, the reviewers are beholden to acting with the utmost integrity, “not discriminating on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, age or disability in admission or access to or employment in its programs and activities” ([SEADAE](#)).
- **Social Responsibility.** The reviewers understand their role as researcher, in contributing to informing the field, and to advancing scientific and scholarly knowledge for the common good.

### *Realities of the Study*

- **Timeline.** The timeline for the review team’s investigation of the CAS in the Arts offered the opportunity to focus on specific elements common to quality standards sets, including clear objectives, age-level appropriate investigation of the content area, and ease of readability within the framework.
- **Referent Examples.** The designation of the comparison sets was based on the collective professional experience of the reviewers who have all had prior involvement with creating and revising teacher and student learning standards, identifying and analyzing arts education models, implementing and disseminating standards and assessments, and supporting instructional practices in the arts for use in schools.
- **Data Collection Resources.** Data collected was limited to current online resources available within the referent examples and the field’s sharing of arts education standards construction and components. The reviewers were knowledgeable regarding both previous and the most current state and national arts standards, having been involved in the design, creation, and adoption of the National Core Arts Standards.
- **Assumptions.** A starting point for the reviewers in the construction of the report included several assumptions. The team assumed that (1) the educational environment in place in Colorado provides students access to quality instruction under the direction of a professional educator who has been certified within the intended content area of study; (2) there are opportunities in the classroom to utilize effective tools of instruction, whether these are traditional or technological in nature; and (3) there is ample instructional time and sufficient frequency for students to deeply investigate concepts, develop skills, and master techniques in order to achieve the objectives as called for in the standards for the content area.

### **General Observations and Recommendations**

All suggested modifications are intended as candid and constructive feedback that ultimately support the building of the next generation of young dancers, musicians, actors, artists, and artistic technicians’ skills and knowledge as well as an arts literate public. Specific and detailed analysis of the CAS for each arts discipline appear in the content area sections of this

report. General observations and recommendations that reach across all disciplines are described here.

A preliminary overview of the CAS for the Arts leads to the observation that all content areas consistently use broad, sweeping statements of intent that do not necessitate action and are not written in measurable language. It is recommended that content specialists tasked with refining the 2020 standards across all arts disciplines examine the appendices that articulate specific ratings and supporting commentary to improve the quality, specificity, and rigor of all indicator language that supports classroom practice. Additionally, the current standards lack consistency and a singular voice (i.e., parallel language) with respect to the flow of the standards from grade to grade and across grade band clusters and arts disciplines. It is worth noting that standards writing is an iterative process and requires ample opportunity for writing multiple drafts within a specific timeframe, grounded by common understandings and a laser focus on how standards and indicators will be interpreted by teachers, students, parents, and administrators, and implemented by classroom teachers. We acknowledge that the standards documents have multiple audiences which requires sensitivity and clarity of intent.

Another general recommendation relates to references to drama and theatre throughout the document. National organizations in the arts recognize “theatre” as a common term for those courses in performing arts and technical theatre, whereas the term “drama” tends to be associated with language arts coursework. Additionally, the NCAS and School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) course codes are alphabetized by arts discipline using the term “theatre”, and therefore Colorado’s data does not align with national data gathering protocol. It is recommended that the title *Colorado Academic Standards for Drama and Theatre* be clarified with a revision to *Colorado Academic Standards for Theatre* and that references to the discipline throughout the document be revised as well.

The CAS for the Arts uses different terminology at different grade bands which adds to the difficulty in navigating the documents. It is recommended that the language is standardized across arts disciplines and grade levels. For the purposes of this review, the terms “indicators”, “evidence outcomes”, and “outcomes” are used interchangeably.

Additionally, the reviewers found the organizational structure of the Colorado standards document difficult to navigate because of the presence of both academic standards and suggestions for high-quality teaching and learning experiences. The document could be improved by clearly separating the academic standards and indicators from the suggestions for instructional practice. These statements of fact supporting instructional practice are valuable but might better serve educators as supplemental documents. It is recommended that any revision of CAS for the Arts includes adopting a structure that more closely parallels NCAS as many states across the country have done.

## **Dance Findings and Recommendations**

Dance Findings and Recommendations provides observations and recommendations specific to the CAS for Dance. The first component is an internal examination in which the CAS for Dance underwent a thorough examination of their content, regarding sufficient rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence to drive the creation and implementation of robust PK-12 arts curricula in a manner which is scalable and for which student growth can be measured.

The second component of the CAS for Dance review consists of an external examination of comparison of examples of state, national, and international dance standards, with respect to organizational and conceptual frameworks.

### ***Internal Quality Review***

For the purposes of this study, a spreadsheet developed by SEADAE was used as a tool to evaluate the expectations for student outcomes for each of the four categories listed below. The same approach was used in the reviews of the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts, Music, and Visual Art.

The four categories comprise the CAS for Dance follow:

- Movement, Technique, and Performance
- Create, Compose, and Choreograph
- Historical and Cultural Context
- Reflect, Connect, and Respond

These four categories formed the basis on which expectations for student outcomes were developed. These “big ideas” are encapsulated in the GLEs of the CAS for Dance. The indicators within each GLE are the expectations for what learners should know and be able to do because of instruction in dance.

### ***Methodology***

The method of review for the CAS for Dance was to examine the grade level expectations and indicators for student learning to determine and evaluate the degree to which the grade bands offer clear progressions of learning. The review investigated whether the standards engage mastery of content knowledge and skills that progress logically from simple to more complex and are measurable for assessment. The ranking for the grade band, supported by specific narrative comments, was calculated using numeric scores rating the rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence for each standard or indicator of student learning. These numeric scores were assigned to the preceding four ‘lenses’ with which the standards were reviewed: 3 points for *Strong*; 2 for *Moderate*; 1 for *Weak*; and 0 for *Not Found* if rigor, depth, breadth or coherence was not explicitly evident in the standard.

**Standard 1. Movement, Technique, and Performance**

The understanding of the elements of movement and development of kinesthetic and interpersonal awareness through exploration and technical competency lead to artistic interpretation and expression.

**Table 1**

*CAS for Dance Standard 1 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES DANCE PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Perform	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	PK-2	1.00	1.03	0.97	1.00
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	3-5	1.15	1.15	1.09	1.15
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	6-8	0.93	1.00	0.90	1.03
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	HS Fundamental	1.09	1.09	1.05	1.14
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	HS Extended	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.14

**Grades PK-2.** In Grades PK-2 for Movement, Technique, and Performance, the indicators should provide more active language for demonstration of knowledge and skills. For example, the indicator “explore movement to encourage body awareness” is very broad and does not specify types of movement that could achieve this goal. It is recommended that NCAS be used as a source of examples of language that could help refine and add specificity to ambiguous indicators. “Identify and demonstrate different directions moving the body” and “identify speed of dances as fast or slow and move to various rhythms or tempi” are examples of specific language from NCAS. Additionally, all indicators should describe active learning that can be used to assess mastery of skill. Several indicators do not describe active learning but rather are statements of fact or information or are suggested teaching practices.

**Grades 3-5.** In general, many of the indicators for Grades 3-5 offer more active and specific language for demonstration of content knowledge and skills than Grades PK-2. The Grades 3-5 indicators focus more on movement and technical accuracy than exploration of movement qualities as in the previous grade band. It is recommended that the exploration of movement qualities continue in Grades 3-5 as well as Grades PK-2, instead of focusing solely on technical accuracy and increasing the number of genres examined. Movement elements can still be the focus of lessons, even when exploring them in a variety of genres. Creative movement and exploration should remain an important emphasis in Grades 3-5, as these skills will develop problem solving skills and keep students engaged in making personal choices with confidence, rather than primarily following the movement of the teacher which could develop inhibition in improvisational skills or individual expression. Both creativity in movement and technical accuracy need to be equally valued in Grades 3-5 not only to encourage an awareness of technical accuracy but also to continue with the individual movement exploration and expression foundation that has been started. As in Grades PK-2, several indicators do not describe active learning but rather are statements of fact or information or are suggested teaching practices.

**Grades 6-8.** In Grades 6-8, the focus is on technique for artistic expression, alignment and control, and intention, with the goal of determining strategies for achieving performance accuracy, control, and expressiveness. Many of the indicators that discuss qualities, expression of movement, alignment, clarity, and attention to detail are on target with development and learning progression. However, others are vague and would be difficult to assess. It is recommended that the indicators be worded to clarify exactly what skills students should be able to demonstrate as a measurable outcome. For example, definitions of strong center, flexibility, alignment, and explicit expectation should be strengthened, and more active language found for demonstrating or assessing those skills. As in the previous grade bands, several indicators do not describe active learning but rather are statements of fact or information or are suggested teaching practices.

**High School.** The high school indicators are generally developmentally appropriate. However, some indicators better align with Standard 2: Create, Compose, and Choreograph. As in the previous grade bands, several indicators do not describe active learning but rather are statements of fact or information or are suggested teaching practices. Several of the indicators do not seem to relate to dance content as they are written but could easily be made relevant with a revision of language for clarity.

***Standard 2. Create, Compose and Choreograph***

Creating in dance involves using the dance elements of space, time, and energy to explore, improvise, and develop movement phrases, sequences, and dances. Choreography is the art of dance making using meaning, intent, and principles of structure and design. In dance, there are a number of levels or stages in the creative process that define and are involved in solving artistic problems in order to present a completed work of art. These stages include observing or studying the stimulus or intent; becoming engaged with that intent; tapping into feelings, memories, and the imagination that relate to the intent; problem solving by creating a shorter dance study or longer dance; and using critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate the finished product.

**Table 2**

*CAS for Dance Standard 2 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES DANCE PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Create	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	PK-2	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	3-5	1.10	1.10	1.03	1.10
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	6-8	1.19	1.24	1.16	1.24
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	HS Fundamental	1.13	1.13	1.07	1.13
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	HS Extended	1.21	1.21	1.21	1.21

**Grade PK-2.** Many of the standards for Grades PK-2 for Create, Compose, and Choreograph are clear and measurable. These clear and measurable standards reflect a logical progression and give actionable language from the elements of dance. As in Standard 1, there

are several indicators that are statements of fact or information or are teaching practices. It is recommended that indicators related to organization or structure be revised for clarity and examples of structures be provided.

**Grades 3-5.** In Grades 3-5, the indicators that are clear are developmentally appropriate and in line with learning progression. They give actionable language that can be assessed for learning. However, indicators that are statements of fact or information or are teaching practices should be revised.

**Grades 6-8.** In Grades 6-8, more specific language should be added to the indicators to allow for demonstration of a measurable outcome. Indicators such as “experiment with movement elements in a variety of combinations” would be stronger with specific examples. “Basic improvisational skills” is another example. What are those basic improvisational skills? What exactly will students be expected to know or be able to do?

**High School.** The high school standards are on target with development and GLEs. The actionable words such as refine, analyze, and evaluate are measurable and in alignment with literacy expectations. As in other standards, there are several indicators that are statements of fact or information or are teaching practices but not actionable performance skills that can be assessed.

***Standard 3. Historical and Cultural Context***

This standard focuses on understanding the global and cultural relevance of dance. The goal is to understand how dance shapes and reflects cultures and history over time, and acknowledge dance in society as creative, expressive, communicable, and social.

**Table 3**

*CAS for Dance Standard 3 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES DANCE PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Connect	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	PK-2	1.22	1.25	1.22	1.19
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	3-5	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	6-8	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	HS Fundamental	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	HS Extended	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

**Grades PK-2.** In Grades PK-2, the focus is on exploring social dances, folk dances, historical dances, and the contribution of dance to a community. The indicators requiring discussion, reflection, comparing, and contrasting are in line with preparing students for later learning targets and for preparing students for literacy expectations in later grades. Examples of dances would be helpful in creating more specific learning targets. There are also several indicators that are statements of fact or information or teaching practices but are not active learning standards used to assess mastery of skills.

**Grades 3-5.** Social and folk dances from various cultures or historical periods, masterworks from history, and the connection between dance and history is the focus of this grade band. These outcomes are in line with grade level expectations, and many of the indicators are written clearly and measurable. Grades 3-5 standards would be strengthened with more specific examples of dances. Statements of fact or information or teaching practices that are not active learning standards should be revised or omitted.

**Grades 6-8.** The outcomes for Grades 6-8 should be revised to include more detail, clarity, and actionable, measurable outcomes. For example, “perform movements specific to various cultures and eras” does not give enough information to be a strong indicator of knowledge or skill. What specific movement, culture, or eras are expected of the students? Indicators that are statements of fact or information or teaching practices but do not describe active learning used to assess mastery of skills should be revised.

**High School.** The high school standards require researching, identifying, interpreting, and analyzing cultural and historical dances and the role of dance in society and communities. These indicators for the most part are actionable and measurable. However, there are several indicators that are statements of fact or information or teaching practices but do not describe active learning that can be used to assess mastery of skills.

***Standard 4. Reflect, Connect, and Respond***

This standard focuses on reflecting upon dance, connecting it with other disciplines, and responding to it to discuss and analyze dance as art. Critique and analysis of new dance works, reconstructions, and masterworks allow for distinguishing and understanding of aesthetic values and artistic intent.

**Table 4**

*CAS for Dance Standard 4 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES DANCE PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Respond	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	PK-2	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	3-5	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.12
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	6-8	1.17	1.17	1.17	1.17
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	HS Fundamental	0.92	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	HS Extended	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.09

**Grades PK-2.** Several of the indicators in Grades PK-2 for Reflect, Connect, and Respond do not provide any measurable outcomes. For example, “experiencing joy” is not something that can be measured or assessed by students or teachers and does not demonstrate content knowledge in any way. These ambiguous phrases should be revised to use more actionable, identifiable verbs. The indicators using actionable language such as describe, identify, demonstrate, respond, and discuss are more effective in language and writing style.



**Grades 3-5.** The Grades 3-5 band has more actionable and measurable objectives (e.g., recognizing and identifying genres using dance specific vocabulary, comparing and contrasting dance styles, describing movement vocabulary) than previous standards. However, there are also several indicators that are statements of fact and information or teaching practices but do not describe active learning that can be used to assess mastery of skills. These indicators should be revised into assessable learning targets.

**Grades 6-8.** The Grade 6-8 band continues to use actionable and measurable language that encourages higher level thinking and understanding of dance and its relationship to communities and other subjects. Many of these standards are well-written, developmentally appropriate, and drive literacy and fluency skills. However, there are still several indicators that are statements of fact and information or teaching practices but do not describe active learning that can be used to assess mastery of skills.

**High School.** Several indicators in the high school grade band need more specific language to show demonstration of knowledge. For example, “create connections to social activities” or “connect communities to create an impact with dance” are vague and do not give clear, direct learning language. Several indicators that are statements of fact and information or are teaching practices but are not active learning standards used to assess mastery of skills require revision.

### ***Internal Review Summary***

Overall, the Colorado Academic Standards for Dance and indicators of achievement lack specificity, offering few qualitative criteria and no quantifiable scale with which to decide if students are approaching the standard, are functioning at the level of the standard, or exceeding expectations of the standards. More importantly, the lack of measurable outcomes to the attainment of dance content knowledge and skills leaves no way to gauge a student’s level of progression and mastery of dance. Many of the standards are on the right track but need refinement and continued editing to provide clarity and measurable outcomes that demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills.

### ***External Referent Review***

For the purposes of this review, four referent standards examples were used for comparison and contrast with the Colorado Academic Standards for Dance: the [Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts](#), the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards Visual and Performing Arts](#), the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS), and an international example of standards from Australia, the [New South Wales Education Standards Authority](#). Additional background information is provided below about each of these standards sets later in this report.

Elements identified for comparison between each referent example and the CAS for Dance include the following items:

- purpose statement for the standards

- topical organization of the academic content areas
- standards themselves
- identification of grade levels
- grade-level expectations
- *Students Will/By End of* statements
- high school expectations
- additional features

When comparing the CAS for Dance to the referent standards, the reviewers rated the latter as *Very Similar, Similar, Dissimilar, or Very Dissimilar*. The similarities and dissimilarities among the standards are described and appear as graphic organizers in the alignment study tables below.

**Table 5**

*Alignment Study for CAS for Dance and Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts (Dance)*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><u><a href="#">Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts (Dance)</a></u></b>
<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b> Dance as art represents creative self-expression through the medium of human movement. The essence of dance is to feel, create, compose, interpret, perform, and respond. Dance is the physical expression of an idea developed through a process of research, inquiry, and movement discovery. As students inquire into dance, they gain skills in creating, performing, viewing, and responding.</p> <p>The purpose of dance education in preschool through high school is to broadly educate all students in dance as an art form and to promote physical activity for fitness. Dance can provide connections with any subject matter and help students to understand concepts important in other disciplines. Analyzing and critiquing dances, past and present, supports understanding of the relevance of the work in its time and culture.</p> <p>Students participating in school-based dance programs gain confidence in communicating and defending their ideas and decisions. They demonstrate a strong sense of self-worth and satisfaction.</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b> The CAS for Dance address dance and the importance of dance as an art form and physical fitness as taught in schools.</p>	<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b> Delaware links directly to the NCAS.</p>

<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b> Each standard is organized around Create, Perform, and Critically Respond; statements on Prepared Graduates, Grade Level Expectations, and Academic Context and Connections; and further division into categories. An introduction to the entire CAS for Dance is provided as well.</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b> The Delaware student learning standards and outcome indicators align to the NCAS artistic processes and their associated process components.</p>
<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b> Movement, Technique and Performance Create, Compose, and Choreograph Historical and Cultural Context Reflect, Connect, and Respond</p>	<p><b><i>Very similar:</i></b> The major categories of the standards are primarily from the same four big idea buckets.</p>	<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b> Creating, Performing, Responding, Connecting</p>
<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b> PK-12</p>	<p><b><i>Very Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b> PK-12</p>
<p><b><i>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</i></b> Grade Level Learning and Development Expectations</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Outcomes:</i></b> Anchor Standards, Enduring Understandings, and Essential Questions</p>
<p><b><i>Students Will/By End of Statements:</i></b> The statements not written in measurable language sometimes lack clarity. Many are statements of fact rather than learning outcomes.</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Indicators:</i></b> The indicators are more detailed with clarity and specific, actionable, measurable language.</p>
<p><b><i>High School Expectations:</i></b> Fundamental Pathway, Extended Pathway</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>High School Expectations:</i></b> Proficient, Accomplished, Advanced</p>

**Table 6**

*Alignment Study for CAS for Dance and New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Visual and Performing Arts (Dance)*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><a href="#"><u>New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Visual and Performing Arts (Dance)</u></a></b>
<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b> Dance as art represents creative self-expression through the medium of human movement. The essence of dance is to feel, create, compose, interpret, perform, and respond. Dance is the physical expression of an idea developed through</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b> The CAS for Dance only address dance and the importance of dance as an art</p>	<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b> Creativity is a driving force in the 21st century global economy, with the fastest growing jobs and emerging industries relying on the ability of workers to think unconventionally and use their imaginations.</p>

<p>a process of research, inquiry, and movement discovery. As students inquire into dance, they gain skills in creating, performing, viewing, and responding.</p> <p>The purpose of dance education in preschool through high school is to broadly educate all students in dance as an art form and to promote physical activity for fitness. Dance can provide connections with any subject matter and help students to understand concepts important in other disciplines. Analyzing and critiquing dances, past and present, support understanding of the relevance of the work in its time and culture.</p> <p>Students participating in school-based dance programs gain confidence in communicating and defending their ideas and decisions. They demonstrate a strong sense of self-worth and satisfaction.</p>	<p>form and physical fitness as taught in schools. New Jersey addresses all arts and their importance to the world. They also include a mission and vision statement.</p>	<p>“The best employers the world over will be looking for the most competent, most creative, and most innovative people on the face of the earth ... This will be true not just for the top professionals and managers, but up and down the length and breadth of the workforce ... Those countries that produce the most important new products and services can capture a premium in the world market ...”</p> <p>(2007, National Center on Education and the Economy)</p> <p>Experience with and knowledge of the arts are essential components of the P-12 curriculum in the 21st century. As the state of New Jersey works to transform public education to meet the needs of a changing world and the 21st century workforce, capitalizing on the unique ability of the arts to unleash creativity and innovation in our students is critical for success, as reflected in the mission and vision that follow:</p> <p><b>Mission:</b> The arts enable personal, intellectual, social, economic, and human growth by fostering creativity and providing opportunities for expression beyond the limits of language.</p> <p><b>Vision:</b> An education in the arts fosters a population that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creates, reshapes, and fully participates in the enhancement of the quality of life, globally.</li> <li>● Participates in social, cultural, and intellectual interplay among people of different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds through a focus on the humanities.</li> <li>● Possesses essential technical skills and abilities significant to many aspects of life and work in the 21st century.</li> <li>● Understands and impacts the increasingly complex technological environment.</li> </ul>
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<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b> Each standard is organized around Create, Perform, and Critically Respond; statements on Prepared Graduates, Grade Level Expectations, and Academic Context and Connections; and further division into categories. An introduction to the entire CAS for Dance is provided as well.</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b> The New Jersey student learning standards and outcome indicators align with the NCAS artistic processes and their associated process components. Additionally, the New Jersey student learning outcomes link to social and emotional learning competencies.</p>
<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b> Movement, Technique and Performance Create, Compose, and Choreograph Historical and Cultural Context Reflect, Connect, and Respond</p>	<p><b><i>Similar:</i></b> The major categories are primarily from the same four big idea buckets, but the names are dissimilar.</p>	<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b> The Creative Process History of the Arts and Culture Performing Aesthetic Responses and Critique Methodologies</p>
<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b> PK-12</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b> 2, 5, 8, and 12</p>
<p><b><i>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</i></b> Grade Level Learning and Development Expectations</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Outcomes:</i></b> The standards are the same across all arts disciplines and then are broken down by content area and content statements.</p>
<p><b><i>Students Will/By End of Statements:</i></b> The statements not written in measurable language sometimes lack clarity. Many are statements of fact rather than learning outcomes.</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Indicators:</i></b> The indicators in the New Jersey standard set are clear and detailed and employ specific, actionable, measurable language. Each grade band offers four indicators.</p>
<p><b><i>High School Expectations:</i></b> Fundamental Pathway, Extended Pathway</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b> Colorado has two pathways and New Jersey has one set of indicators for proficiency by the end of high school.</p>	<p><b><i>High School Expectations:</i></b> Proficiency</p>

**Table 7**

*Alignment Study for CAS for Dance and New South Wales Education Standards Authority Creative Arts (Dance 7-10, 11-12)*

<p><b>Colorado Academic Standards</b></p>	<p><b>Alignment</b></p>	<p><u><a href="#">New South Wales Education Standards Authority (Dance)</a></u></p>
<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b>                      Dance as art represents creative self-expression through the medium of human movement. The essence of dance is to feel, create, compose, interpret, perform, and respond. Dance is the physical expression of an idea developed through a process of research, inquiry, and movement discovery. As students inquire into dance, they gain skills in creating, performing, viewing, and responding.</p> <p>The purpose of dance education in preschool through high school is to broadly educate all students in dance as an art form and to promote physical activity for fitness. Dance can provide connections with any subject matter and help students to understand concepts important in other disciplines. Analyzing and critiquing dances, past and present, supports understanding of the relevance of the work in its time and culture.</p> <p>Students participating in school-based dance programs gain confidence in communicating and defending their ideas and decisions. They demonstrate a strong sense of self-worth and satisfaction.</p>	<p><b><i>Similar:</i></b>                      Even though the New South Wales statement is much shorter, it has a similar philosophy to the Colorado statement.</p>	<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b>                      The study of dance enables young people to participate in and enjoy exploring the world through dance’s forms and ideas from a variety of historical and contemporary contexts. Students investigate, critically reflect, and respond by creating and performing dance, developing their expressive skills through movement.</p>
<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b>                      Each standard is organized around Create, Perform, and Critically Respond; statements on Prepared Graduates, Grade Level Expectations, and Academic Context and Connections; and further division into categories. An introduction to the entire CAS for Dance is provided as well.</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b>                      New South Wales Education Standards Authority Course Performance Descriptors are organized by stages 1-10. All stages focus on Performing, Composing, and Appreciation.</p>

<b>Standards:</b> Movement, Technique and Performance Create, Compose, and Choreograph Historical and Cultural Context Reflect, Connect, and Respond	<b>Similar:</b> Performing and Composing in the NSW standards are very similar to Movement, Technique, and Performance as well as to Create, Compose, and Choreograph in the CAS for Dance. Appreciating in the NSW standards could encompass Historical and Cultural context as well as Reflect, Connect, and Respond in the CAS for Dance.	<b>Standards:</b> Performing, Composing, Appreciating
<b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> PK-12	<b>Dissimilar</b>	<b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Grades 7-10, Grades 11-12
<b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Grade Level Learning and Development Expectation	<b>Similar</b>	<b>Outcomes:</b> Clear outcomes that are measurable for assessment
<b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> The statements not written in immeasurable language sometimes lack clarity. Many are statements of fact rather than learning outcomes.	<b>Dissimilar</b>	<b>Indicators:</b> Student can learn to: Student can learn about:
<b>High School Expectations:</b> Fundamental Pathway, Extended Pathway	<b>Dissimilar</b>	<b>High School Expectations:</b> Dance Stage 6, Higher School Certificate

**Table 8**

*Alignment Study for CAS for Dance and NCAS (Dance)*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><a href="#">National Core Arts Standards (Dance)</a></b>
<b>Purpose Statement:</b> Dance as art represents creative self-expression through the medium of human	<b>Dissimilar:</b> The CAS for Dance only	<b>Purpose Statement:</b> The arts have always served as the distinctive vehicle for discovering who

<p>movement. The essence of dance is to feel, create, compose, interpret, perform, and respond. Dance is the physical expression of an idea developed through a process of research, inquiry, and movement discovery. As students inquire into dance, they gain skills in creating, performing, viewing, and responding.</p> <p>The purpose of dance education in preschool through high school is to broadly educate all students in dance as an art form and to promote physical activity for fitness. Dance can provide connections with any subject matter and help students to understand concepts important in other disciplines. Analyzing and critiquing dances, past and present, supports understanding of the relevance of the work in its time and culture.</p> <p>Students participating in school-based dance programs gain confidence in communicating and defending their ideas and decisions. They demonstrate a strong sense of self-worth and satisfaction.</p>	<p>address dance and the importance of dance as an art form and physical fitness as taught in schools.</p> <p>The National Core Arts Standards discuss the importance of all arts, the importance of the standards, and how they are written to be model cornerstone assessments to be measured and understood by stakeholders.</p>	<p>we are. Providing ways of thinking as disciplined as science or math and as disparate as philosophy or literature, the arts are used by and have shaped every culture and individual on earth. They continue to infuse our lives on nearly all levels, generating a significant part of the creative and intellectual capital that drives our economy.</p> <p>The fact that the arts provide important touchstones confirms their value to the development of every human being.</p> <p>The NCAS are framed by a definition of artistic literacy that includes philosophical foundations and lifelong goals, artistic processes and creative practices, anchor and performance standards that students should attain, and model cornerstone assessments by which they can be measured. The connective threads of this conceptual framework are designed to be understood by all stakeholders and, ultimately, to ensure success for both educators and students in the real world of the school.</p>
<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b> Each standard is organized around Create, Perform, and Critically Respond; statements on Prepared Graduates, Grade Level Expectations, and Academic Context and Connections; and further division into categories. An introduction to the entire CAS for Dance is provided as well.</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b> The NCAS student learning standards and outcome indicators align with the NCAS artistic processes and their associated process components.</p>
<p><b>Standards:</b> Movement, Technique and Performance Create, Compose, and Choreograph Historical and Cultural Context Reflect, Connect, and Respond</p>	<p><b>Very similar:</b> The major categories are primarily from the same four big idea buckets.</p>	<p><b>Standards:</b> Creating, Performing, Responding, Connecting</p>
<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b> PK-12</p>	<p><b><i>Very Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b> PK-12</p>
<p><b><i>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</i></b> Grade Level Learning and Development Expectation</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Outcomes:</i></b> Contains an Anchor Standard, Enduring Understandings, and Essential Questions</p>



<p><b><i>Students Will/By End of Statements:</i></b>  The statements not written in measurable language sometimes lack clarity. Many are statements of fact rather than learning outcomes.</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Indicators:</i></b>  The indicators are detailed with clarity and specific, actionable, measurable language.</p>
<p><b><i>High School Expectations:</i></b>  Fundamental Pathway, Extended Pathway</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>High School Expectations:</i></b>  Proficient, Accomplished, Advanced</p>

***Summary***

Overall, the Colorado Academic Standards for Dance are on the right track but require editing and revision to ensure that all the indicators are written in the same language and style. All standards and indicators should finish the statement *By the end of//The Student will...* and should start with an active verb for demonstrating knowledge of content and skills. These indicators should be clear, measurable, and used for assessment to determine mastery of the grade level content for dance. Much of the work is vague and non-specific. Many of the current indicators are statements of fact or information or teaching practices rather than actual learning expectations or objectives.

***Recommendations***

It is recommended that each indicator be revised into more active language, starting with an active learning verb, and ensuring that all writing is consistent and clear. All passive or ambiguous language should be revised to ensure that each indicator is a benchmark of mastery and can be easily assessed. Each indicator should clearly state what students are required to know or be able to do by the end of the course.

## **Drama and Theater Arts Findings and Recommendations**

Drama and Theater Arts Findings and Recommendations provides observations and recommendations specific to the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) for Drama and Theatre Arts. The Drama and Theatre Arts content review consists of two main components. The first is an internal examination in which the content of the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts was examined regarding the research question:

To what extent do the Colorado Academic Standards for Drama and Theatre Arts provide sufficient rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence to drive the creation and implementation of robust PK-12 arts curricula in a manner which is scalable and for which student growth can be measured?

The second component of the theatre review consists of an external examination of examples of referent state, national, and international theatre standards and responds to the research question:

How do the Colorado Academic Standards for Drama and Theatre Arts compare to other state, national, and international arts standards with respect to organizational and conceptual frameworks?

### ***Internal Quality Review***

The CDE adopted the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts in 2020. The introduction to the standards states that theatre arts are important to life and learning, a concept with which the standards align. The standards are defined as:

**Create.** The creation of drama and theatre is a demonstration of learned skills in forming new theatrical works, interpreting theatrical works for performance and design, and developing characters and analyzing roles.

**Perform.** The theatre process is a product of the knowledge and essential skills gained in the study of theatre toward the expression of the human experience in story, movement, speech, and staging for an intended audience.

**Critically Respond.** An informed literacy, thoughtful critique, and cultural research are key aspects of theatre arts study. Responding focuses on the artistic and scientific knowledge of conventions, cultures, styles, genres, theories, and technologies needed to know better choices and best practices.

To meet the basic needs of all students, the advanced needs of those engaging theatre arts as a focus area and the needs of those pursuing careers in theatre, the standards review subcommittee developed three pathways:

**Fundamental.** The Fundamental Pathway is available for students who have limited interest in theatrical performance or theatre-related vocations, or whose interest lies within

other aspects of theatre-related vocations, such as acoustic and structural engineering, advertising and marketing, event management, fashion design, mass communications, or publishing.

**Advanced.** The Advanced Pathway is designed to engage students that demonstrate a dedicated interest in the art form to explore connections throughout their immediate community and the world at large, providing intentional opportunities for students to engage with theatre arts skills and concepts that reach far beyond the stage.

**Professional.** The Professional Pathway is available for students who intend to pursue postsecondary education or vocation in theatre, which might lead to careers in theatre education, performance, technical production, theater management, or other theatre-related areas. The expectations in the Professional Pathway meet all the prepared graduate competencies with a much higher degree of rigor appropriate to the expectations of postsecondary and career theatre opportunities.

In the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts at the preschool level, indicators of progress are accompanied by examples of high-quality teaching and learning experiences. At the kindergarten through high school levels, indicators of progress are accompanied by evidence outcomes along with academic context and connections.

For the purposes of this study, a spreadsheet developed by SEADAE was used as a tool to evaluate the degree to which expectations for student outcomes for creating, performing, and critically responding to works of drama explicitly stipulated in the evidence outcomes for individual grade levels and cumulatively among the grade band clusters. The same approach was used in the reviews of the CAS for Dance, Music, and Visual Art.

### ***Methodology***

Findings for the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts appear in the table below. The table includes headings for the standard and grade level; the rater's score for the relative degree of rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence; and accompanying comments. As shown in Table 9 below, numeric scores were assigned to the preceding four 'lenses' with which the standards were reviewed: 3 points for *Strong*; 2 for *Moderate*; 1 for *Weak*; and 0 points for *Not Found* if evidence of rigor, depth, breadth, or coherence was not explicitly evident.

Supporting detail for the CAS Drama and Theater Arts composite score averages can be found in the appendices. To make informed judgments about the scope and sequence of the drama and theater arts standards, the grade level scores for rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence were totaled and averaged as grade band composite score averages. The composite score averages for the three drama and theatre standards (Create, Perform, and Critically Respond) appear in the tables below.

## ***General Observations***

The Academic Context and Connections across the entire document are not written as standards, and few contain action verbs. As they are not drama and theater arts standards, they were not rated. Many of the academic connections provided in the early grades are tenuous, although by middle school the connections are more evident. The relevance between subjects was not analyzed.

CAS for Drama and Theater Arts utilizes three standards, rather than four standards utilized in CAS for Music, Dance, and Visual Arts. The other three arts disciplines align with the Create, Perform, Respond, and Connect standards found in the NCAS. CAS for Drama and Theater Arts embeds indicators related to the Connect standard into each of the other three standards, leaving one of the Connect topics out of most grade levels and including a career standard in the high school levels. Teachers meeting in professional learning communities with other fine arts teachers would benefit from being able to work with similar standards. The justification for this choice is not explained.

### ***Standard 1: Create***

The creation of drama and theatre is a demonstration of learned skills in forming new theatrical works, interpreting theatrical works for performance and design, and developing characters and analyzing roles.

**Table 9**

*CAS for Drama and Theater Arts Standard 1 Composite Score Averages*

<b>NCAS Alignment</b>	<b>GRADE BAND</b>	<b>Rigor 3,2,1,0 average</b>	<b>Depth 3,2,1,0 average</b>	<b>Breadth 3,2,1,0 average</b>	<b>Coherence 3,2,1,0 average</b>
Create	PK-2	1.82	2.64	2.67	2.48
	3-5	2.81	3.00	2.96	2.77
	6-8	2.85	2.96	2.96	2.96
	HS Fundamental	3.00	2.67	2.78	2.67
	HS Advanced	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
	HS Professional	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

**Grades PK-2.** The early childhood grade band suffers from a lack of cohesiveness between grade levels and overly rigorous outcomes. This is reflected in this grade band's lower composite scores. In some instances, identical language is seen in preschool and kindergarten indicators of progress, implying no expectation of growth. Most important, however, is that the indicators of progress in the preschool level and the evidence outcomes in Grades K-2 are too rigorous for a four- or five-year-old. Developmentally appropriate activities at this age level are conducted with prompting and support and as guided play. This scaffolding is not seen in these indicators. For example, one indicator requires the students to collaborate, which is a complex skill for a five-year-old if it is not encompassed in a form of

play. Additionally, language development at this age makes activities that rely on movement and gesture better choices than activities that rely on voice or vocal skills.

**Grades 3-5.** Overall, the upper elementary grade band is consistent and flows smoothly from grade to grade. In some instances, the Colorado standards expand the NCAS standards, elevating the rigor. One outcome that is found in Grades 4 and 6 is not found in Grade 5, creating a gap. The omitted outcome is “Imagine how a character’s inner thoughts impact the story and given circumstances in a drama/theatre work”.

**Grades 6-8.** The middle school grade band is almost identical to the NCAS. Critical analysis is occasionally omitted in the Colorado document, perhaps intentionally lowering the rigor.

**High School.** As in Grades 6-8, the three high school levels are almost identical to NCAS. In the cases where they are not, the sentences were rearranged to put the action verb at the beginning of the sentence. This revision is an improvement that will make evaluating students easier for teachers and the outcomes easier to comprehend by students.

***Standard 2: Perform***

The theatre process is a product of the knowledge and essential skills gained in the study of theatre toward the expression of the human experience in story, movement, speech, and staging for an intended audience.

**Table 10**

*CAS for Drama and Theater Arts Standard 2 Composite Score Averages*

COMPOSITE AVERAGES	Grade Band	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Perform	PK-2	1.70	2.57	2.61	2.30
	3-5	2.70	3.00	3.00	2.80
	6-8	2.87	3.00	2.93	2.93
	HS Fundamental	2.80	3.00	3.00	3.00
	HS Advanced	2.80	3.00	3.00	3.00
	HS Professional	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

**Grades PK-2.** As in the Create standard, there are instances at the preschool level in which the indicators of progress are too rigorous to be developmentally appropriate. For example, one indicator states “Make appropriate character reactions that connect the environment or cultures of the story using imagination or background knowledge in a dramatic play or a guided drama experience (e.g., story drama, creative drama, movement stories, pantomime, puppetry, etc.)”. The corresponding standard in the NCAS states “With prompting and support, identify characters in dramatic play or a guided drama experience

(e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama)”. Most indicators at the early childhood level should include prompting and support, although this indicator would still be too difficult even with the scaffolding included. Identifying characters is a literacy skill that three- and four-year-olds are still developing; having them connect a culture to a character reaction is too complex. This same indicator also introduces the concept of technical elements, and many of those need to be monitored and supported for safety reasons, especially at this age. As mentioned in the Create section, the impact of language development on activities that rely on voice versus gesture and movement is also relevant in the Perform section.

**Grades 3-5.** The upper elementary Perform outcomes are consistent with the Create outcomes. There are still a few instances of overly ambitious outcomes, including one for Grade 3 which states “Challenge and alter the basic design or technical elements used in a creative drama or theatre work”. The NCAS standard is worded “Identify the basic technical elements that can be used in drama/theatre work”. The difference in difficulty between challenging or altering and identifying is substantial and may be more appropriate for Grade 5.

**Grades 6-8.** The outcomes related to collaborating and implementing a drama work and the outcomes related to performing a drama work are similar, and seem to be addressing the same concept, which is to perform in a small ensemble for an audience of their peers. Note: there is a typo in Grade 7 DT.7.2.1 “Experiment various staging choices to enhance the story in a drama/theatre work”. It should be “experiment with”.

**High School.** The three high school levels are very similar to the NCAS. The CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts increases rigor by using the word “assess” instead of “identify” in “Assess essential text information, research from various sources, and the director’s concept that influences artistic choices in a drama/theatre work”.

***Standard 3. Critically Respond***

An informed literacy, thoughtful critique, and cultural research are key aspects of theatre arts study. Responding focuses on the artistic and scientific knowledge of conventions, cultures, styles, genres, theories, and technologies needed to know better choices and best practices.

**Table 11**

*CAS for Drama and Theater Arts Standard 3 Composite Score Averages*

COMPOSITE AVERAGES	Grade Band	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Respond	PK-2	2.07	2.76	2.79	2.07
	3-5	2.07	2.76	2.79	2.07
	6-8	2.93	2.93	2.93	3.00
	HS Fundamental	2.70	2.80	3.00	2.70
	HS Advanced	2.90	2.90	2.80	2.70
	HS Professional	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

**Grades PK-2.** The Critically Respond standard repeats the same problem of rigor that the first two sections displayed in the early childhood grade band with overly ambitious indicators of progress and evidence outcomes. The scaffolding necessary in this age group (e.g., with prompting and support) is especially evident in the Critically Respond section. There is also an example in this section in which the NCAS specify “explain or use text and pictures” as an assessment method. Some indicators and outcomes are reiterations of the same concept (e.g., “Reflect on choices in a dramatic play and guided drama experiences” and “Recognize artistic choices”; “Identify choices in dramatic play or a guided drama experience and Respond to visual, movement, or vocal choices in a drama experience”). Combining similar indicators into one indicator would be more efficient. This standard from the NCAS is missing from the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts and is essential for social and emotional learning, especially with early childhood students: “With prompting and support, express an emotional response to characters in dramatic play or a guided drama experience (e.g., process drama, story drama creative drama): To underscore the earlier point about the concept of play with this age group, the following standard could be reworded: “Inquire and investigate the processes of theatrical performance”. Wording in the NCAS is “With prompting and support, actively engage with others in dramatic play or a guided drama experience (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama)”. Note: There is a typo: “Inquire and investigate in the collaborative processes in a variety of dramatic experiences should be investigated”. Insert “which”.

**Grades 3-5.** In a few instances the word “analyze” and the word “hypothesize” replace lower order verbs from the NCAS, therefore raising their rigor.

**Grades 6-8.** The Grades 6-8 outcomes for the Critically Respond standard are very similar to the NCAS.

**High School.** The high school outcomes for the Critically Respond standard are very similar to the NCAS. However, the outcome “Respond to what is seen, felt and heard in a drama/theatre work to analyze artistic choices and to formulate meaningful feedback” is one level lower in the NCAS. This changes the flow from the lower pathway to the upper pathway and merits reconsideration. CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts is to be commended for the addition of a career-oriented outcome in each of the three high school pathways. Another strength is the sentence reconstruction that puts the verb at the beginning of the sentence as exhibited here: “Revise personal work and interpret the work of others when participating in or observing a drama/theatre work using detailed supporting evidence and appropriate criteria”.

### ***Internal Review Summary***

Most of the outcomes are either replications of the NCAS or very close interpretations. However, it is recommended that certain inconsistencies be addressed, specifically in the PK-2 level. Scaffolding (i.e., with prompting and support) is essential at this stage of development and should be added. It is also recommended that embedding the Connect standard into other standards be reconsidered. Eliminating the stand-alone Connect standard is inconsistent with

the other arts disciplines. A justification for this in the document would be helpful to new teachers, teachers transferring from other states, or teachers who participate in professional learning communities with teachers from other arts disciplines. Aside from these two recommendations, the CAS for Drama and Theater Arts are cohesive, comprehensive, rigorous, and developmentally appropriate, especially for middle and high school.

***External Referent Review***

For the purposes of this review, four referent standards examples were utilized to compare and contrast to the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts. Four standard sets were selected: the [Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts](#), the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards Visual and Performing Arts](#), the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS), and an international example of standards from Australia, the [New South Wales Education Standards Authority](#). Additional background information is provided about each of these standards sets later in this report.

Elements identified for comparison between each referent example and the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts include the following items:

- purpose statement for the standards
- topical organization of the academic content areas
- standards themselves
- identification of grade levels
- grade-level expectations
- *Students Will/By End of* statements
- high school expectations
- additional features

When comparing the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts to the referent standards, the reviewers rated the latter as *Very Similar, Similar, Dissimilar, or Very Dissimilar*. The similarities and dissimilarities among the standards are described and appear as graphic organizers in the alignment study tables below.

**Table 12**

*Alignment Study for CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts and Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts (Theatre)*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><a href="#">Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts (Theatre)</a></b>
<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b> The Colorado purpose statement for drama and theatre arts standards begins with “Theatre Arts are Important to Life and Learning”. That concept is then explored in the introduction to the standards.</p>	<p><b><i>Similar:</i></b> Although Colorado’s purpose statement is specific to drama</p>	<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b> Delaware reflects the NCAS, which does not have an introduction for Theatre specifically, but has a broad introduction for the entire document.</p>



	and Delaware’s is not, there are similar themes such as the arts’ vital role in developing a whole child that will be a citizen of the world.	
<b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> Each standard is organized around Create, Perform, and Critically Respond; a statement on Prepared Graduates, Grade Level Expectation, and Academic Context and Connections; and further division into categories. An introduction to the entire CAS for Drama and Theater Arts is provided as well.	<b>Dissimilar:</b> Colorado has combined Respond and Connect and has different information on each page.	<b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> Links lead directly to the charts in the NCAS.
<b>Standards:</b> The Colorado standards do not include a separate section for Connect, and instead include Connect standards in both Create and Critically Respond standards.	<b>Similar</b>	<b>Standards:</b> As the Delaware standards are just the NCAS, please see below chart for NCAS.
<b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Individual grade levels are addressed from Preschool through Grade 8. Three pathways (Fundamental, Advanced, and Professional) are then addressed for high school.	<b>Similar:</b> The grade levels identified are similar but there is a difference in nomenclature.	<b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Individual grade levels are addressed from Preschool through Grade 8. Three pathways (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced) are then addressed for high school.
<b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Grade level learning and development expectations are the same as those found in the NCAS.	<b>Very Similar</b>	<b>Outcomes:</b> As Delaware uses the NCAS, the GLEs are the same.
<b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> The Colorado standards use the term “evidence outcomes”, but many are worded the same or similarly to the NCAS.	<b>Similar</b>	<b>Indicators:</b> Delaware uses the term “standards” and links directly to the NCAS.
<b>High School Expectations:</b> The CDE describes eleven expectations in a section titled “Prepared Graduates in Drama and Theatre Arts”.	<b>Similar</b>	<b>High School Expectations:</b> The Delaware standards link directly to the NCAS.
<b>Additional Feature:</b> The Colorado standards include a section titled “Academic Context and Connections” (e.g., civic and interpersonal skills, entrepreneurship) in every standard.	<b>Very Dissimilar</b>	<b>Additional Feature:</b> The Delaware standards provide a link to the NCAS glossary.

**Table 13**

*Alignment Study for CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts and New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Visual and Performing Arts (Theatre)*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><u>New Jersey Visual and Performing Arts (Theatre)</u></b>
<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b> The Colorado purpose statement for drama and theatre arts standards begins with “Theatre Arts are Important to Life and Learning”. That concept is then explored in the introduction to the standards.</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b> The New Jersey standards do not have an introduction dedicated to Theater, but rather an introduction to the overall document. Their document is based on the NCAS. The New Jersey Visual and Performing Arts (Theatre) states “The arts infuse our lives with meaning on nearly all levels—generating significant creative and intellectual capital.” This is a very similar concept to the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts introduction.</p>
<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b> Each standard is organized around Create, Perform, and Critically Respond; a statement on Prepared Graduates, Grade Level Expectation, and Academic Context and Connections; and further division into categories. An introduction to the entire CAS for Drama and Theater Arts is provided as well.</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b> The New Jersey student learning standards and outcome indicators align with the NCAS artistic processes and their associated process components. They include anchor standards, ending understandings, and essential questions.</p>
<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b> The Colorado standards do not include a separate section for Connect, and instead includes Connect standards in both Create and Critically Respond standards. They are also split into individual grade levels.</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b> The New Jersey standards include sections for artistic processes, with Respond and Connect addressed separately. New Jersey’s standards are written in grade bands, rather than individual grade levels, until high school. The standards themselves are based on the NCAS.</p>
<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b> Individual grade levels are addressed from Preschool through Grade 8. Three pathways (Fundamental, Advanced, and Professional) are then addressed for high school.</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b> New Jersey standards are organized by grade band rather than individual grade levels.</p>	<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b> New Jersey standards are presented for Grade 2, Grade 5, Grade 8, and High School Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced</p>
<p><b><i>Grade-Level Expectations:</i></b> Grade level learning and development expectations are the same as those found in the NCAS.</p>	<p><b><i>Very Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Outcomes:</i></b> Grade level expectations are the same as those found in the NCAS.</p>

<b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> The Colorado standards use the term “evidence outcomes”, but many are worded the same or similarly to the NCAS.	<b>Similar</b>	<b>Indicators:</b> Because they are based on the NCAS, the indicators are very similar to those in the Colorado standards. However, they are compiled by grade band, so they use the highest common denominator for each band.
<b>High School Expectations:</b> The CDE describes eleven expectations in a section titled “Prepared Graduates in Drama and Theatre Arts”.	<b>Dissimilar:</b> The Colorado Prepared Graduate list is specific to drama and theater arts, whereas the New Jersey standards address expectations for the study of fine arts in general.	<b>High School Expectations:</b> The New Jersey standards link to the NCAS, which address all the fine arts broadly, not each one specifically. The philosophical foundations and lifelong goals are approached as the arts as communication; the arts as creative personal realization; the arts as culture, history, and connectors; the arts as a means to wellbeing; and the arts as community engagement.
<b>Additional Feature:</b> The Colorado standards include a section titled “Academic Context and Connections” (e.g., civic and interpersonal skills, entrepreneurship) in every standard.	<b>Dissimilar</b>	<b>Additional Feature:</b> The New Jersey standards provide a glossary.

**Table 14**

*Alignment Study for CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts and New South Wales Education Standards Authority Creative Arts (Drama 7-10, 11-12)*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><u>New South Wales Education Standards Authority Creative Arts (Drama)</u></b>
<b>Purpose Statement:</b> The Colorado purpose statement for drama and theatre arts standards begins with “Theatre Arts are Important to Life and Learning”. That concept is then explored in the introduction to the standards.	<b>Dissimilar:</b> New South Wales (NSW) focuses on art for art’s sake and the elements and principles of Theater	<b>Purpose Statement for Kinder - Year 10:</b> “The study of drama enables young people to develop an interest in and enjoyment of investigating and enacting a wide range of theatrical forms, styles and acting methods. Through critical reflection and acquiring understanding, knowledge and skills, students respond to the ideas and dramatic works of others by creatively and collaboratively developing their own ideas into dramatic action for performance.” The New South Wales documents do not have extensive introductions, but rather what amounts to course descriptions.
<b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b>	<b>Very Dissimilar:</b> Australia has a	<b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b>

<p>Each standard is organized around Create, Perform, and Critically Respond; a statement on Prepared Graduates, Grade Level Expectation, and Academic Context and Connections; and further division into categories. An introduction to the entire CAS for Drama and Theater Arts is provided as well.</p>	<p>different framework for graduating student outcomes and are very specific in their syllabi.</p>	<p>Course Performance Descriptors for Years 7-10 are divided into Making, Performing, and Appreciating; and then divided into Grades A-E for Year 7 through Year 10. For Years 11 and 12, there are Performance Band Descriptions for Bands 2-6, with Band 1 being blank. In Years 11 and 12, Topics are covered: Topic 1: Dramatic Traditions in Australia; Topic 2: Contemporary Australian Theatre Practice; Topic 3: The Voice of Women in Theatre; Topic 4: Approaches to Acting; Topic 5: Verbatim Theatre; Topic 6: Black Comedy; Topic 7: Multi-Discipline Theatre; Topic 8: Significant Plays of the 20th Century; and Topic 9: Japanese Traditional and Contemporary Theatre.</p>
<p><b>Standards:</b> The Colorado standards and outcomes have action verbs and are based on overarching concepts and practices more than vocabulary and flair.</p>	<p><b>Very dissimilar:</b> CAS and the NSW document do not define “standards” in the same way. There are no action verbs in NSW standards, but they contain general examples of how a student should be when finished with a course.</p>	<p><b>Standards:</b> Examples from Band 6 in Years 11 and 12 illustrate the NSW’s approach to student outcomes: “Has extensive knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the elements of drama and can demonstrate these using exemplary skills in making, performing, and critically studying drama. Demonstrates flair and originality in conceptualizing, developing, and producing an exemplary dramatic work”.</p>
<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Individual grade levels from Preschool through Grade 8 and three pathways for high school (Fundamental, Advanced, and Professional)</p>	<p><b>Very Dissimilar:</b> The NSW system of categorizing student age levels is very different from the American.</p>	<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Individual grade levels from Kinder through Year 10 followed by combined Years 11 and 12. Drama is listed in Year 7-10. Kinder through Year 6 is offered a survey course titled “Creative Arts”.</p>
<p><b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Grade level learning and development expectations are the same as those found in the NCAS.</p>	<p><b>Dissimilar:</b> Middle school expectations are similar in many ways, but as there are no drama standards for elementary school and the high school standards are very career</p>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b> An example outcome for middle school students is “analyses and synthesises drama with a sophisticated awareness of the unique relationship between performer and audience”. The wording of the middle school outcomes is similar, but there are none for elementary, and the upper high school outcomes are very different.</p>

	oriented in NSW, the Colorado expectations and the NSW expectations are dissimilar overall.	
<b><i>Students Will/By End of... Statements:</i></b> The Colorado standards use the term “evidence outcomes”, but many are worded the same or similarly to the NCAS.	<b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b> The NSW indicators are descriptors of a typical student than an outcome required by the end of a course.	<b><i>Indicators:</i></b> By Grades A-E, indicators are stated as “A student at this grade typically:”
<b><i>High School Expectations:</i></b> The CDE describes eleven expectations in a section titled “Prepared Graduates in Drama and Theatre Arts”.	<b><i>Dissimilar</i></b> The NSW expectations for high school students describe a theatre student who will be pursuing a hobby or career in the art form after high school. The CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts expectations are for a well-rounded citizen more than career-based students.	<b><i>High School Expectations:</i></b> Expectations for high school are illustrated by this example from Band 6, which is the highest level: “has extensive knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the elements of drama and can demonstrate these using exemplary skills in making, performing, and critically studying drama. Demonstrates flair and originality in conceptualising, developing, and producing an exemplary dramatic work. Collaborates at a sophisticated level to devise and present an innovative group performance which evokes a powerful audience response. Demonstrates sophisticated analysis, synthesis and application of information and/or research about drama and theatre, and ability to frame responses in an informed personal and coherent manner”.
<b><i>Additional Feature:</i></b> The Colorado standards include a section titled “Academic Context and Connections” (e.g., civic and interpersonal skills, entrepreneurship) in every standard.	<b><i>Very Dissimilar:</i></b> The NSW system has syllabi for their schools and teachers. It is not open-ended.	<b><i>Additional Feature:</i></b> NSW includes a syllabi, reference materials, and works to choose from. The NSW standards are very specific regarding curricula.

**Table 15**

*Alignment Study for CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts and NCAS (Theatre)*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><u>National Core Arts Standards (Theatre)</u></b>
<p><b>Purpose Statement:</b> The Colorado purpose statement for drama and theatre arts standards begins with “Theatre Arts are Important to Life and Learning”. That concept is then explored in the introduction to the standards.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>Purpose Statement:</b> The NCAS doesn’t have an introduction for Theatre specifically but has an extensive introduction for the entire document. There are similar themes to the purpose statement of the Colorado standards related to the vital role the arts play in developing a whole child that will be a citizen of the world.</p>
<p><b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> Each standard is organized around Create, Perform, and Critically Respond; a statement on Prepared Graduates, Grade Level Expectation, and Academic Context and Connections; and further division into categories. An introduction to the entire CAS for Drama and Theater Arts is provided as well.</p>	<p><i>Dissimilar</i></p>	<p><b>Organization:</b> The NCAS student learning standards and outcome indicators are organized around the four artistic processes and their associated process components. These include anchor standards, ending understandings, and essential questions.</p>
<p><b>Standards:</b> The Colorado standards do not include a separate section for Connect, and instead includes Connect standards in both Create and Critically Respond standards. They are mostly based on the NCAS; however, some have been reworded and a few were added.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>Standards:</b> The NCAS address Connect as an independent concept rather than combining or omitting parts of it. The wording includes action verbs and covers broad concepts with process as a focus.</p>
<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Individual grade levels from Preschool through Grade 8 and three levels for high school (Fundamental, Advanced, and Professional)</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> PreK through Grade 8 and three levels for high school (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced)</p>
<p><b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Grade level learning and development expectations are the same as those found in the NCAS</p>	<p><i>Very Similar</i></p>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b></p>
<p><b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> The Colorado standards use the term “evidence outcomes”, but many are worded the same or similarly to the NCAS.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>Indicators:</b> NCAS uses the term “standards”.</p>

<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> The CDE describes eleven expectations in a section titled “Prepared Graduates in Drama and Theatre Arts”.</p>	<p><b>Dissimilar:</b> The Colorado Prepared Graduate list is specific to drama and theater arts, whereas the NCAS address expectations for the study of fine arts in general.</p>	<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> The NCAS address all the fine arts broadly, not each one specifically. The philosophical foundations and lifelong goals are approached as the arts as communication; the arts as creative personal realization; the arts as culture, history, and connectors; the arts as a means to wellbeing; and the arts as community engagement.</p>
<p><b>Additional Feature:</b> The Colorado standards include a section titled “Academic Context and Connections” (e.g., civic and interpersonal skills, entrepreneurship) in every standard.</p>	<p><b>Very Dissimilar</b></p>	<p><b>Additional Feature:</b> The NCAS provide a glossary.</p>

**Summary**

When comparing the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts to other standard sets, there are more similarities than differences. However, the differences are significant. New Jersey, Delaware, and the NCAS all address Connect and Respond as separate concepts and standards, yet Colorado has chosen to embed some of them into other standards and omitting others entirely. It is recommended that the Connect standard be considered a stand-alone concept to clarify its importance for students and for teachers in professional learning communities.

The inclusion of the Academic Context and Connections is another significant difference from the referent examples. Although there is validity in connecting the arts and other academic subjects, including literacy and social and emotional learning competencies, the importance of the arts as an independent core subject may be diminished by continually demonstrating its support of other subjects.

**Recommendations**

There are two main recommendations from this review, both internal and external, for the CAS for Drama and Theater Arts. The first recommendation is to address scaffolding for Grades PK-2. The second recommendation is to reconsider the decision to embed the Connect standard into other standards. This could be addressed by separating the Connect outcomes and organizing the drama and theatre arts standards to align with the standards for the other arts disciplines. Another means of addressing this recommendation would be to provide a justification paragraph in the introduction to the CAS for Drama and Theatre Arts explaining the justification for this choice. Aside from these two issues, the standards are well written, academically rigorous, and flow well from one grade level to the next. They are aligned in enough ways with the NCAS and other state standards to be valuable for both students and teachers. The work and research that went into this document is apparent.

## Music Findings and Recommendations

The CAS for Music and corresponding GLEs and indicators were examined for rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence; for their relevance in relation to opportunities for students to experience components of media arts; and for similarities and differences between the CAS for Music and the NCAS, music standards from the states of Delaware and New Jersey, and the province of New South Wales in Australia. Specific references to each of the four music standards and their corresponding GLEs and indicators, based on the criteria above, are found further on in this narrative report and in the appendix. In sum, the complete document known as the Colorado Academic Standards for Music, which includes four music standards, aligned prepared graduate competencies, grade-level expectations, indicators, evidence outcomes, 21st Century skills, and readiness competencies provide educators and students with a great many essential and demanding ideas, concepts, skills, and understandings to harvest for a robust set of learning expectations in music for Colorado. However, several of the indicators require rewording to align them properly so they can be of maximum use to educators.

### *Internal Quality Review*

The CDE provided a description of four music standards from the current work (2020). These definitions, and other resources mentioned previously, inform this review examining the degree to which the standards articulate what a student should know and be able to do through a study of music in grades PreK through high school. Other resources to support this review include the referent standards examples and consultation with other members of the review team.

The Colorado Academic Standards for Music (2020) are defined as:

- **Expression of Music.** The expression of music is the process of practice, refinement, and performance of acquired music knowledge and skills to communicate a range of thoughts and emotions.
- **Creation of Music.** The creation of music is the demonstration of learned skills in the composition, improvisation, and arranging of music.
- **Theory of Music.** The theory of music is the understanding of the distinctive language, conventions, mechanics, and structure of organized sound. Investigation of music theory allows for a more complete understanding of all aspects of the musical process.
- **Aesthetic Valuation of Music.** The aesthetic valuation of music focuses on the knowledge and perspectives needed to make informed evaluations and critiques of music. It also addresses the historical, cultural, and societal contexts which are often the beauty, heart, and soul of music.

These definitions provide the conceptual underpinnings and highlight the big ideas embedded in the GLEs and indicators that drive expectations for what learners should know and be able to demonstrate. As in the reviews of the other arts disciplines, the Colorado Cross Index comparison spreadsheet, developed by SEADAE, was used to determine the degree to which the GLE and indicator(s) represents the rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence needed to support learner development for the stated skill and knowledge objectives within individual grades



and across grade band clusters. The complete spreadsheet of the music review is provided as an appendix to this report. Condensed tables for each standard are offered within this section of the comprehensive report, accompanied by a written narrative.

### ***Methodology***

The method of review for the Colorado Academic Standards for Music was to examine the grade level expectations and corresponding indicators for individual grades as well as cumulatively within and across grade band clusters. The objective was to ascertain the degree to which the grade bands offer clear progressions of learning, which call for student mastery of content knowledge and skills that progress logically from simple to more complex ways of understanding, applying, and transferring content knowledge. The ranking in music for the grade band, supported by specific narrative comments, was calculated using composite scores. Composite score rankings follow the same consistent classification system as individual grade level rankings of *Strong* (3), *Moderate* (2), *Weak* (1), or *Not Found* (0) with respect to rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence. The tables contained within this section of the comprehensive report share the strengths and areas of growth within the grade bands for each of the four standards.

Calculations for Grades PK-2, Grades 3-5, and Grades 6-8 were made by finding the average for the grade band for each standard. High school remained in two separate categories (Foundational and Advanced) as indicated by the GLEs and indicators.

The grain size chosen for the examination of the CAS for Music was the indicator since it most closely resembled that of the NCAS performance standards. In the review of each standard, it is noteworthy that many of the indicators did not offer measurable language that was connected to the actual standard intent. This was universally true for all grade bands.

### ***Standard 1. Expression of Music***

The expression of music is the process of practice, refinement, and performance of acquired music knowledge and skills to communicate a range of thoughts and emotions.

**Table 16**

*CAS for Music Standard 1 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES MUSIC PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Perform	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	PK-2	1.64	1.60	1.64	2.00
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	3-5	2.02	1.98	1.92	2.18
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	6-8	1.44	1.46	1.42	1.74
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	HS Accomplished	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.88
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	HS Advanced	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.75

Notable areas of moderate support in Standard 1 include the coherence of the GLEs and corresponding indicators for the Grades PK-2 and Grades 3-5 bands, as well as the rigor and

depth of the GLEs and corresponding indicators for the Grades 3-5 band. Grade bands with composite scores less than 2 need some attention in the construction of GLEs and corresponding indicators. In general, the intent of an indicator may have more meaning behind it from the perspective of the original writers. The reader, however, may find the implementation and/or execution of certain indicators challenging or in need of additional unpacking prior to being useful. There is a lack of clarity in several indicators as to what a student should know and be able to do for the GLE. Moreover, some language chosen for the grade level expectations are statements, and/or do not offer specific information to measure the skills being required for that grade and standard. Examples of indicators that are not clear and measurable include:

- “Communicating a variety of ideas and emotions through performance demonstrates a willingness to try new things.” (MU.K.1.2)
- “Synthesizing information from multiple sources helps (sic) to demonstrate understanding of a topic.” (MU.1.1.3)
- “Recognizing where performance problems can be identified, as well as possible solutions can be created within musical practice and refinement processes, increases critical thinking within a musical context.” (MU.3.1.3)

At best, these statements (and others like them) are statements of fact but contain no actionable and/or assessable components. They fail to provide the reader (e.g., administrator, educator, or citizen) with clear steps on how to use and/or measure the indicator. At worst, some of these same indicators contain structural issues that make them difficult to read and to understand.

**Grades PK-2.** As previously mentioned, the rigor, depth, and breadth of the GLEs and accompanying indicators require attention, mainly due to the inclusion of language most readers would struggle to implement in a practical manner. In terms of coherence of the GLEs and accompanying indicators, although certain language in the indicators lacked actionable text, they were, for the most part, understandable.

**Grades 3-5.** This grade band exhibits the strongest collection of GLEs and corresponding indicators for Music Standard 1. The rigor and coherence scored in the moderate range, while the depth and breadth scored nearly moderate. This grade band also contains some of the problematic indicator language, which is specifically noted in the complete analysis results found in the appendix.

**Grades 6-8.** The composite averages for rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence for this grade band all indicate that attention needs to be paid to the language of the indicators specifically for Standard 1. This grade band, as well as the HS Advanced level, both contained an abundance of indicators that would prove to be problematic when presented to educators for implementing, or to administrators or supervisors for evaluating educator instructional practice.

**High School.** For both the Accomplished and Advanced levels, the composite averages indicate an inclination toward indicators that lacked rigor, depth, and breadth, but were coherent. The challenge for educators using these indicators would be the dissonance in

text that makes sense as a statement of fact but lacks actionable and/or measurable components.

**Standard 2. Creation of Music**

The creation of music is the demonstration of learned skills in the composition, improvisation, and arranging of music.

**Table 17**

*CAS for Music Standard 2 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES MUSIC PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Create	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	PK-2	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.80
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	3-5	1.33	1.22	1.22	1.72
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	6-8	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.94
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	HS Accomplished	1.50	1.50	1.50	2.00
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	HS Advanced	1.50	1.50	1.50	2.00

Overall, we see the composite averages indicating a need to examine the text of several indicators to align them with those that contain actionable items. A clear example of this can be found here:

- The first three Indicators for MU.3.2.1 present as “compose”, “improvise”, and “arrange”, respectively.
- The next three Indicators for MU.3.2.1 present as “composing... help to synthesize”, “composing... cause one to innovate”, and “creating... requires consideration”, respectively.

If Indicators 4, 5, and 6 for MU.3.2.1 were rewritten to be parallel in structure to Indicators 1, 2, and 3 of MU.3.2.1, they could read as follows:

- MU.3.2.1: “Arrange music through composing, improvising, and arranging to synthesize ideas in original and surprising ways.”
- MU.3.2.1: “Innovate through composing, improvising, or arranging to connect learning across domains and to recognize new opportunities.”
- MU.3.2.1: “Create music that requires consideration of purpose, audience, planning, and delivery.”

This example of restructuring the text of problematic Indicators to retain their respective essence(s) while transforming the text to action statements that drives learning for students, can serve as a model for the work that needs to be done throughout the CAS for Music.

**Grades PK-2.** The composite averages for this grade band exhibit a need to address the rigor, depth, and breadth of many of the indicators. There are several indicators that are appropriate for literacy and fluency, but there are some overly ambitious indicators for grade level expectations.

**Grades 3-5.** Much like the Grades PK-2 band, the composite scores of the Grades 3-5 band exhibit a need to address the rigor, depth, and breadth of many indicators.

**Grades 6-8.** The composite scores for the Grades 6-8 band reveal slightly below moderate rigor, depth, and breadth of the indicators. As in the Grades PK-2 and Grades 3-5 bands, there are some indicators for each GLE that are aligned well to common grade level abilities.

**High School.** The High School Accomplished and High School Advanced tracks reflect similar trends as the other grade bands, with composite scores reflecting slightly below moderate rigor, depth, and breadth with moderate coherence.

***Standard 3. Theory of Music***

The theory of music is the understanding of the distinctive language, conventions, mechanics, and structure of organized sound. Investigation of music theory allows for a more complete understanding of all aspects of the musical process.

**Table 18**

*CAS for Music Standard 3 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES MUSIC PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Respond	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	PK-2	0.98	0.98	0.92	1.81
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	3-5	1.14	0.84	0.82	2.02
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	6-8	1.73	1.66	1.66	2.27
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	HS Accomplished	1.60	1.47	1.47	2.20
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	HS Advanced	1.21	1.29	1.29	2.29

The composite scores averages for Standard 3 were on the below moderate to weak level. This is a direct result of the inclusion of indicators that do not offer active language for demonstrating knowledge and skills, are statements of fact rather than learning objectives that drive teaching and learning, are non-specific, and/or are not written in parallel construction with other indicators.

**Grades PK-2.** This grade band requires the most attention to rewriting the indicators that are problematic.

**Grades 3-5.** Composite score averages for this grade band are better than the Grades PK-2 band, but still reveal a series of indicators that require rewording to maximize their usefulness to educators at all levels of experience.

**Grades 6-8.** The Grades 6-8 band composite score averages display the strongest rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence when compared to the other grade bands. Although there is still attention that needs to be paid to rewriting some indicators to offer active language for demonstrating knowledge and skills, overall, this grade band scored slightly above moderate.

**High School.** For both high school tracks, the categories measured indicated a moderate scoring average, with a slightly weaker showing in the High School Advanced track (although coherence in the advanced track outpaced that in the accomplished track.) Again, paying attention to the indicators that are written with no active language for demonstrating knowledge and skills, those that are statements of fact rather than learning objectives that drive teaching and learning, those that are non-specific, and/or those that are not written in parallel structure to the other indicators for each GLE would greatly increase the composite score averages for both tracks, and a higher-quality learning experience for students could be achieved.

***Standard 4. Aesthetic Valuation of Music***

The aesthetic valuation of music focuses on the knowledge and perspectives needed to make informed evaluations and critiques of music. It also addresses the historical, cultural, and societal contexts which are often the beauty, heart, and soul of music.

**Table 19**

*CAS for Music Standard 4 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES MUSIC PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Connect	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	PK-2	2.17	2.07	2.07	2.45
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	3-5	1.79	1.71	1.71	2.25
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	6-8	1.19	1.21	1.21	1.96
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	HS Accomplished	1.59	1.59	1.59	2.06
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	HS Advanced	1.59	1.59	1.59	2.06

Overall, the composite score averages for Music Standard 4 show the most rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence when compared to the other three standards in the set. Notable areas are the above moderate coherence in the Grades PK-2 and Grades 3-5 bands.

**Grades PK-2.** The strongest performing grade band for this standard, the Grades PK-2 indicators consistently demonstrated moderate rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence. The form and structure of these indicators may require minor revisions to strengthen their effectiveness, but they should be studied as models for revisions in other areas of this standards set.

**Grades 3-5.** Much like the Grade PK-2 band, the Grade 3-5 band indicators rated consistently slightly below moderate in rigor, depth, and breadth, and slightly above moderate in coherence. Some indicators will require revision to boost their effectiveness, but overall, they rated well in comparison to other grade bands for this standard.

**Grades 6-8.** Again, as in Standard 2, the Grade 6-8 band indicators rated lowest when compared to other grade bands in the same standard. This is due almost exclusively to indicators that require rewriting due to their lack of active language for demonstrating

knowledge and skills, their non-specificity, or their general lack of parallel construction when compared to other indicators.

**High School.** Both high school tracks scored identically on rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence. Their slightly below-to-moderate ratings indicate that attention should be paid to those indicators that are problematic because of their current language structure.

### ***Internal Review Summary***

Several general observations emerged from the internal review of the CAS for Music. Language choices varied throughout the GLEs and coordinating indicators: sometimes passive voice was used, while at other times actionable language establishing clear expectations for levels of student proficiency was used. Additionally, a preponderance of GLEs used language that was nonspecific and did not clearly target an essential learning objective, while others called for highly specific skills. First, it is recommended that future iterations of the CAS for Music use consistent vernacular and tense. Next, the grade band clusters for Grades PK-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, HS Accomplished, and HS Advanced did not consistently incorporate progressions of increasingly sophisticated knowledge and skills for the learner to master. Finally, although the CAS purpose statements for Music, as defined, did well to serve as the foundational grounding for the grade level expectations, there were distinct issues in how to actively communicate the essence of those purpose statements in the authoring of indicators.

### ***External Referent Review***

For the purposes of this review, four referent standards examples were used for comparison and contrast with the Colorado Academic Standards for Music: the [Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts](#), the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards Visual and Performing Arts](#), the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS), and an international example of standards from Australia, the [New South Wales Education Standards Authority](#). Additional background information is provided below about each of these standards sets later in this report.

Elements identified for comparison between each referent example and the CAS for Music include the following items:

- purpose statement for the standards
- topical organization of the academic content areas
- standards themselves
- identification of grade levels
- grade-level expectations
- *Students Will/By End of* statements
- high school expectations
- additional features

When comparing the CAS for Music to the referent standards, the reviewers rated the latter as *Very Similar*, *Similar*, *Dissimilar*, or *Very Dissimilar*. The similarities and dissimilarities

among the standards are described and appear as graphic organizers in the alignment study tables below.

**Table 20**

*Alignment Study for CAS for Music and Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts-Music*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><u>Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts-Music</u></b>
<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b>            “The Colorado Academic Standards in music are the topical organization of the concepts and skills all Colorado students should know and be able to do throughout their preschool through twelfth-grade experience.” (p. 6)</p>	<p><b><i>Similar:</i></b>            Both identify as a guide or organizing mechanism for the topical material.</p>	<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b>            “A process that guides educators in providing a unified quality arts education for students in Pre-K through High School.” (Landing page of the standards site)</p>
<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b>            The CAS for Music document is organized around four standards and eight grade level expectations.</p>	<p><b><i>Very similar:</i></b>            The CAS for Music standards and their coordinating GLEs imitate the Delaware standards in structure and intent.</p>	<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b>            The Delaware Standards for Music document is organized around four artistic processes and eleven anchor standards.</p>
<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expression of Music</li> <li>● Creation of Music</li> <li>● Theory of Music</li> <li>● Aesthetic Valuation of Music</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b>            The CAS for Music and Delaware music standards are different in the application of the term “standards”. Delaware uses the term “processes”, and Colorado uses the term “standards.”</p>	<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work</li> <li>● Organize and develop artistic ideas and work</li> <li>● Refine and complete artistic work</li> <li>● Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation</li> <li>● Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.</li> <li>● Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.</li> <li>● Perceive and analyze artistic work.</li> <li>● Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.</li> <li>● Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.</li> <li>• Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Grades PK-12 are identified, with certain designations as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 6 - Novice</li> <li>• Grade 7 - Intermediate</li> <li>• Grade 8 - Proficient</li> <li>• High School - Accomplished and Advanced</li> </ul>	<p><b>Similar:</b> Although the terms designating certain grades (or within grade bands) are different, the basic coverage of grade levels is the same.</p>	<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Grades PK-12 are identified, with high school divided into three levels: Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced.</p>
<p><b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Grade level learning and development expectations, defined as the articulation, concepts, and skills of a standard that indicate a student is making progress toward being ready for graduation, are present at each grade level/grade band.</p>	<p><b>Both Similar and Dissimilar:</b> The grain size is similar. However, Grades PK-12 GLEs inconsistently articulated expectations for students.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b> The discipline-specific, grade-by-grade articulations of student achievement in the arts in Grades PK-8 and at three proficiency levels in high school (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced) are provided. As such, the performance standards translate the anchor standards into specific, measurable learning goals.</p>
<p><b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> These statements indicate that a student is meeting an expectation at the mastery level</p>	<p><b>Dissimilar:</b> Many of the Indicators for each GLE at each grade level are written in such a way that they are unmeasurable or fail to specify how evidence of achievement would be obtained.</p>	<p><b>Indicators:</b> The performance standards associated with the anchor standards are intended to illustrate the type of evidence and methodology needed to show attainment of desired learning.</p>
<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> The GLEs are restated as what prepared graduates in music will be able to do. There are no specific tracks or modalities listed within the document. As stated previously, Grades 6-12 are labeled with proficiencies.</p>	<p><b>Similar:</b> Proficiency designations in the CAS for Music at the high school level indicate differentiation between proficiency levels.</p>	<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> The Delaware standards have preparatory level proficiencies for ensemble and harmonizing instruments (Novice, Intermediate) and high school proficiencies (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced).</p>



<p><b>Additional Feature:</b> Family/Community Guides are provided for each grade level from Grade PK through Grade 12.</p>	<p><b>Dissimilar:</b> The CAS for Music does not contain some additional features that could make all the indicators work properly for their intended outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Additional Feature:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student “I Can” statements</li> <li>● Model Cornerstone Assessments</li> <li>● Student Artwork Samples</li> <li>● Standards at a Glance (the ability to view the entire Grades PK-12 progression of each standard on one sheet.)</li> </ul>
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**Table 21**

*Alignment Study for Colorado Academic Standards – Music and New Jersey Student Learning Standards Visual and Performing Arts - Music*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><u>New Jersey Student Learning Standards Visual and Performing Arts -Music</u></b>
<p><b>Purpose Statement:</b> “The Colorado Academic Standards in music are the topical organization of the concepts and skills all Colorado students should know and be able to do throughout their preschool through twelfth-grade experience.” (p. 6)</p>	<p><b>Similar:</b> Both standard sets present their purpose as an organizational tool for the standards.</p>	<p><b>Purpose Statement:</b> “The New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Visual and Performing Arts are designed to promote lifelong artistic literacy and fluency.” (Landing page of the website.)</p>
<p><b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> The CAS for Music document is organized around four standards and eight grade level expectations.</p>	<p><b>Dissimilar:</b> The CAS for Music and New Jersey music standards are different in the application of the term “standards”. Delaware uses the term “processes”, and Colorado uses the term “standards.”</p>	<p><b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> The New Jersey standards for music document is organized around four artistic processes and eleven anchor standards.</p>
<p><b>Standards:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expression of Music</li> <li>● Creation of Music</li> <li>● Theory of Music</li> <li>● Aesthetic Valuation of Music</li> </ul>	<p><b>Similar</b> Although there are many more standards in the New Jersey document, when examined at the next granular level, they align well with those of</p>	<p><b>Standards:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work</li> <li>● Organize and develop artistic ideas and work</li> <li>● Refine and complete artistic work</li> <li>● Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation</li> </ul>

	the CAS for Music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.</li> <li>● Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.</li> <li>● Perceive and analyze artistic work.</li> <li>● Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.</li> <li>● Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.</li> <li>● Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.</li> <li>● Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Grades PK-12 are identified, with certain designations as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grade 6 - Novice</li> <li>● Grade 7 - Intermediate</li> <li>● Grade 8 - Proficient</li> <li>● High School - Accomplished and Advanced</li> </ul>	<p><b>Similar:</b> Although the CAS for Music does not delineate standards in as small a grain size as New Jersey music standards, there is an effort to differentiate levels. The New Jersey standards do consider a wider variety of types of courses offered to students at varying levels.</p>	<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> For Grades K-12 generalist courses, standards are indicated at Grade 2, Grade 5, Grade 8, High School Proficient, High School Accomplished, and High School Advanced levels. For multi-level and specific courses (e.g., harmonizing instruments), standards are indicated as Novice, Intermediate, Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced.</p>
<p><b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Grade level learning and development expectations, defined as the articulation, concepts, and skills of a standard that indicate a student is making progress toward being ready for graduation, are present at each grade level/grade band.</p>	<p><b>Dissimilar:</b> The CAS for Music details more specifically what students should be able to do at each grade level, versus the New Jersey standards that present expectations in grade and/or proficiency benchmarks but not at each grade level.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b> The discipline-specific, grade-by-grade articulations of student achievement in the arts in Grades PK-8 and at three proficiency levels in high school (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced) are provided. As such, the performance standards translate the anchor standards into specific, measurable learning goals.</p>

<p><b><i>Students Will/By End of Statements:</i></b> These statements indicate that a student is meeting an expectation at the mastery level</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b> The indicators that the CAS for Music uses throughout the standards are inconsistent and lack parallel structure. The New Jersey indicators are consistently action-oriented throughout.</p>	<p><b><i>Indicators:</i></b> These indicators are strong, concise actionable statements attached to each grade/proficiency benchmark.</p>
<p><b><i>High School Expectations:</i></b> The GLEs are restated as what prepared graduates in music will be able to do. There are no specific tracks or modalities listed within the document. As stated previously, Grades 6-12 are labeled with proficiencies.</p>	<p><b><i>Similar:</i></b> Both standard sets present clear expectations for students who graduate.</p>	<p><b><i>High School Expectations:</i></b> “By graduation from high school, all students shall, in at least one area of specialization, be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respond to works of art with insight and depth of understanding, calling upon informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods.</li> <li>2. Develop and present basic analyses of works of art from structural, historical, cultural, and aesthetic perspectives, pointing to their impact on contemporary modes of expression.</li> <li>3. Perform/present/produce in a self-selected arts discipline with consistency, artistic nuance, and technical ability, defining and solving artistic problems with insight, reason, and technical proficiency.</li> <li>4. Relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across arts disciplines, by mixing and matching competencies and understandings in artmaking, history, culture, and analysis in any arts-related project.” (Introduction, p. 6)</li> </ol>
<p><b><i>Additional Feature:</i></b> Family/Community Guides are provided for each grade level from Grade PK through Grade 12.</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b> Each contains a unique set of additional features.</p>	<p><b><i>Additional Feature:</i></b> An Arts and Social Emotional Learning Framework is provided, including resources and reports.</p>

**Table 22**

*Alignment Study for Colorado Academic Standards – Music and New South Wales Education Standards Authority- Music*

Colorado Academic Standards	Alignment	<a href="#"><u>New South Wales Education Standards Authority - Music</u></a>
<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b>            “The Colorado Academic Standards in music are the topical organization of the concepts and skills all Colorado students should know and be able to do throughout their preschool through twelfth-grade experience.” (p. 6)</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b>            The CAS for Music contains a concise, appropriate purpose statement for the collection. The NSW standards for music lack such a message.</p>	<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b>            The complete set of music standards in this set lacks any unifying purpose statement. However, the following appears at the Early Stage 1 - Stage 3 section of the document: “Music involves performing, organising (sic) sound, and listening through the concepts of duration, pitch, dynamics, tone color and structure.”</p>
<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b>            The CAS for Music document is organized around four standards and eight grade level expectations.</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b>            The CAS for Music appear at all grade levels PK-12, with GLEs and indicators written accordingly for the grade level. The NSW standards do not all appear at every grade level.</p>	<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b>            Six core standards spread out over six stages (i.e., levels of learning). Not every standard appears at each stage.</p>
<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expression of Music</li> <li>● Creation of Music</li> <li>● Theory of Music</li> <li>● Aesthetic Valuation of Music</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Similar:</i></b>            Although the NSW collection has two more standards, both the CAS Music and NSW music standards cover similar content and expectations.</p>	<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Performing</li> <li>● Organising (sic) Sound</li> <li>● Listening</li> <li>● Composing</li> <li>● Musicology</li> <li>● Aural Music Skills</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b>            Grades PK-12 are identified, with certain designations as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grade 6 - Novice</li> <li>● Grade 7 - Intermediate</li> <li>● Grade 8 - Proficient</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b>            Although the CAS for Music and NSW music standards set use different systems</p>	<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b>            NSW establishes standards by stages, from Early Stage 1 through Stage 6. Grade levels are alluded to in curricula materials but not explicitly in the NSW stages system.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High School - Accomplished and Advanced</li> </ul>	<p>to indicate grade levels, they do share a commonality in that they identify different proficiency levels.</p>	
<p><b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Grade level learning and development expectations, defined as the articulation, concepts, and skills of a standard that indicate a student is making progress toward being ready for graduation, are present at each grade level/grade band.</p>	<p><b>Similar:</b> Both sets of standards contain statements like GLEs for each grade level or stage.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b> There are clearly articulated expected outcomes for each standard at the stage in which they appear.</p>
<p><b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> These statements indicate that a student is meeting an expectation at the mastery level</p>	<p><b>Similar:</b> Both the CAS and NSW documents contain indicators that address specific student learning expectations and outcomes beyond the GLE level.</p>	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Detailed indicators are provided at each stage.</p>
<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> The GLEs are restated as what prepared graduates in music will be able to do. There are no specific tracks or modalities listed within the document. As stated previously, Grades 6-12 are labeled with proficiencies.</p>	<p><b>Similar:</b> The expectations in the CAS for Music are that students will progress through each standard at every grade level. There are similarly articulated expectations for high school students in NSW. However, high school music is not compulsory in NSW.</p>	<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> Highlighted achievements are provided which students are required to reach in Early Stage 1 through Stage 5 in order to be prepared for Stage 6 (high school). Within the text for Stage 6, there are well-articulated outcomes for those graduating after Grade 12.</p>
<p><b>Additional Feature:</b> Family/Community Guides are provided for each grade level from Grade PK through Grade 12.</p>	<p><b>Dissimilar:</b> The CAS for Music and NSW collections contain separate, yet useful, additional features.</p>	<p><b>Additional Feature:</b> Sample curricula are provided, including templates. Also, sample assessments and associated criteria are included, including templates.</p>

**Table 23**

*Alignment Study for Colorado Academic Standards – Music and National Core Arts Standards - Music*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><u>National Core Arts Standards - Music</u></b>
<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b>            “The Colorado Academic Standards in music are the topical organization of the concepts and skills all Colorado students should know and be able to do throughout their preschool through twelfth-grade experience.” (p. 6)</p>	<p><b><i>Similar:</i></b>            Both identify as a guide or organizing mechanism for the topical material.</p>	<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b>            “A process that guides educators in providing a unified quality arts education for students in Pre-K through high school.” (From the ‘Learn More’ link on the landing page.)</p>
<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b>            The CAS for Music document is organized around four standards and eight grade level expectations.</p>	<p><b><i>Very similar:</i></b>            The CAS for Music standards and their coordinating GLEs imitate the NCAS in structure and intent.</p>	<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b>            The NCAS music document is organized around four artistic processes and eleven anchor standards.</p>
<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expression of Music</li> <li>● Creation of Music</li> <li>● Theory of Music</li> <li>● Aesthetic Valuation of Music</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar:</i></b>            The CAS for Music and NCAS music standards are different in the application of the term “standards”. The NCAS use the term “processes”, and Colorado uses the term “standards.”</p>	<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Generating and conceptualizing ideas</li> <li>● Organizing and developing ideas</li> <li>● Refining and completing products</li> <li>● Selecting, analyzing, and interpreting work</li> <li>● Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.</li> <li>● Conveying meaning through art.</li> <li>● Perceiving and analyzing products.</li> <li>● Applying criteria to evaluate products.</li> <li>● Interpreting intent and meaning.</li> <li>● Synthesizing and relating knowledge and personal experiences to create products.</li> <li>● Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b>            Grades PK-12 are identified, with certain designations as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grade 6 - Novice</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Similar:</i></b>            Although the terms designating grades or grade</p>	<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b>            Grades PK-12 are identified, with high school divided into three levels: Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grade 7 - Intermediate</li> <li>● Grade 8 - Proficient</li> <li>● High School - Accomplished and Advanced</li> </ul>	<p>bands are different, the basic grade levels are the same.</p>	
<p><b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Grade level learning and development expectations, defined as the articulation, concepts, and skills of a standard that indicate a student is making progress toward being ready for graduation, are present at each grade level/grade band.</p>	<p><b>Both Similar and Dissimilar:</b> The grain size is similar in both standard sets. However, the CAS for Music Grades PK-12 GLEs inconsistently articulated expectations for students.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b> The discipline-specific, grade-by-grade articulations of student achievement in the arts in Grades PK-8 and at three proficiency levels in high school (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced) are provided. As such, the performance standards translate the anchor standards into specific, measurable learning goals.</p>
<p><b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> These statements indicate that a student is meeting an expectation at the mastery level</p>	<p><b>Dissimilar:</b> In the CAS for Music, many of the indicators for each GLE at each grade level are written in such a way that they are unmeasurable or fail to specify how evidence of achievement would be obtained.</p>	<p><b>Indicators:</b> The performance standards associated with the anchor standards are intended to illustrate the type of evidence and methodology needed to show attainment of desired learning.</p>
<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> The GLEs are restated as what prepared graduates in music will be able to do. There are no specific tracks or modalities listed within the document. As stated previously, Grades 6-12 are labeled with proficiencies.</p>	<p><b>Similar:</b> Proficiency designations in the CAS for Music at the high school level indicate differentiation between proficiency levels.</p>	<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> The NCAS have preparatory level proficiencies for ensemble and harmonizing instruments (Novice, Intermediate) and high school proficiency levels (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced).</p>
<p><b>Additional Feature:</b> Family/Community Guides are provided for each grade level from Grade PK through Grade 12.</p>	<p><b>Dissimilar:</b> The CAS for Music does not contain some additional features that could make all the indicators work properly for their intended outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Additional Feature:</b> Additional resources provided in the NCAS include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Standards at a Glance (a custom view option for the entire Grades PK-12 span for each discipline in the arts)</li> <li>● Model Cornerstone Assessments</li> <li>● a collection of student exemplars</li> </ul>

## ***Summary***

When comparing the CAS for Music to standard sets from Delaware and New Jersey, to the NCAS, and to music standards from New South Wales, the standards are more similar in scope than they are different. However, the differences are significant. The comparative examples all contain more specific, actionable language within their performance indicators (i.e., the statements that help educators guide students through learning experiences), yet the CAS for Music lacks many of these because they are written in a way that makes them unmeasurable. This could prove to be a serious challenge for students and teachers moving to and from other states where such indicators are more clearly defined and actionable. Despite this significant impediment, the intent of the CAS for Music is strong, and it should be noted that even the poorly written indicators contain a spirit and vision that is admirable. When the indicators that are statements of fact are rewritten to be actionable and measurable, the CAS for Music will be an admirable collection, making them more useful to students and educators.

## ***Other Educational Factors***

In the CAS for Music, minimal support from technology and media is noted. In Music Standard 2, GLE 2 (Creation of Music), there is a reference to creating "... including the use of technology"; however, this only appears in Grade 7. Additionally, in Standard 4, GLE 2 (Aesthetic Valuation of Music), there is a reference to "...CD mix..." in Grade 6. These are the only indicators that show evidence of technology and media being used to build the capacity of learners.

## ***Recommendations***

It is recommended that a CDE writing team review the spreadsheet that documents the specific ratings for each standard, GLE, and indicator to determine if the indicator is written to (1) align with the standard and GLE and (2) contain actionable language that is parallel in structure to all other indicators in the CAS for Music.

The intent of all indicators for the CAS for Music is solid and appropriate, but the language requires revision. The problematic indicators that read as statements should be rewritten with actionable, measurable components. Conversely, another approach might be to remove them from the body of the standards and place them in the introduction or develop them as a support document. With revision, the CAS for Music will be a stronger set of standards.

An additional recommendation is to carefully review all indicators for appropriateness at the prescribed grade level, revisiting some indicators that are overly ambitious for the grade level.



## Visual Arts Findings and Recommendations

Visual Arts Findings and Recommendations provides findings, observations, and recommendations specific to the CAS for Visual Arts. The visual arts content review consists of two main components to the visual arts content, the internal review in which the CAS for Visual Arts underwent an evaluation of its content regarding the research question:

To what extent do the Colorado Academic Standards for Drama and Theatre Arts provide sufficient rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence to drive the creation and implementation of robust PK-12 arts curricula in a manner which is scalable and for which student growth can be measured?

The second component of the visual arts review consists of an external examination of examples of referent state, national, and international visual arts standards. This portion of the study responds to the research question:

How do the Colorado Academic Standards for Drama and Theatre Arts compare to other state, national, and international arts standards with respect to organizational and conceptual frameworks?

### *Internal Quality Review*

The CDE provided a description of four visual arts standards from their current work (2016). These definitions and resources have assisted in identifying what a student should know and be able to do:

- **Observe and Learn to Comprehend.** Articulate and implement critical thinking in the visual arts by synthesizing, evaluating, and analyzing visual information.
- **Envision and Critique to Reflect.** Generate works of art that employ unique ideas, feelings, and values using different media, technologies, styles, and forms of expression.
- **Invent and Discover to Create.** Use the visual arts to express, communicate, and make meaning.
- **Relate and Connect to Transfer.** Recognize, articulate, and validate the value of the visual arts to life-long learning and the human experience.

### *Methodology*

The method of review of the CAS for Visual Arts was to analyze individual grade levels in each of the standards for grade level expectations which support learner development. This was created for Grades PreK and one high school level in high school. For the most part, objective language was used within the standards to include engaging, active, and measurable verbiage to identify how a student will demonstrate their skills and knowledge. The use of active language provides a solid base in which to measure growth versus passive language which results in a lack of clarity.

**Standard 1. Observe and Learn to Comprehend**

Articulate and implement critical thinking in the visual arts by synthesizing, evaluating, and analyzing visual information.

**Table 24**

*CAS for Visual Arts Standard 1 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES VISUAL ARTS PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Present	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	PK-2	2.64	2.07	2.57	2.57
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	3-5	2.77	2.73	2.45	2.55
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	6-8	2.14	2.30	2.00	1.98
	Standard 1 Composite Avg.	HS	1.95	1.81	1.95	1.90

**Grades PK-2.** Grades PK-2 scores show strength and rigor in the indicators overall. For example, in kindergarten, in the Observe and Learn to Comprehend standard, students are expected to “articulate thoughts and establish goals for communication and plan out steps accordingly”. The sequence is logical, providing a continuum of knowledge and skill necessary for setting a foundation for arts literacy. For the most part, statements and expectations are developmentally appropriate while offering active language.

**Grades 3-5.** Grades 3-5 indicators continue to integrate with Grades PK-2 while providing progressive opportunities to enhance arts learning. Technology is integrated throughout; however, it is encouraged to introduce media and technology earlier.

**Grades 6-8.** Grades 6-8 continue to provide opportunities for growth in arts literacy. However, it is recommended that Grade 8 indicators challenge learners to a greater degree in preparation for high school. For example, in Grade 8, under Observe and Learn to Comprehend, students are asked to use visual art terminology to describe elements in a work. Students are asked to do this as early as Grades PreK-2 and Grades 3-5.

**High School.** High school standards and statements were a bit difficult to evaluate in the areas of growth. It is unclear how a student is challenged to progress from Grade 9 to Grade 12. There are some very strong statements and opportunities for attaining and advancing in arts literacy. Many of these indicators provided opportunities to reinforce core concepts and provide a firm foundation for students to learn more advanced concepts. There are no standards for students who wish to pursue advanced courses of study. By measuring only once at the high school level, it is difficult to see what is expected in each year of art education.

**Standard 2. Envision and Critique to Reflect**

Generate works of art that employ unique ideas, feelings, and values using different media, technologies, styles, and forms of expression.

**Table 25**

*CAS for Visual Arts Standard 2 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES VISUAL ARTS PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Respond	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	PK-2	2.95	2.26	2.74	2.74
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	3-5	2.83	2.50	2.38	2.08
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	6-8	2.42	2.73	2.35	2.12
	Standard 2 Composite Avg.	HS	2.00	2.05	2.00	2.25

**Grades PK-2.** Grades PK-2 scores show strength overall. The sequence is logical, providing a continuum of knowledge and skill necessary for setting a foundation for arts literacy. For the most part, statements and expectations are developmentally appropriate while offering active language. However, to check for understanding, it is suggested that students be allowed to question. Questioning strategies can be used to help students delve deeper into learning and challenge them to solve problems as they participate in arts learning.

**Grades 3-5.** Again, Grades 3-5 standards continue to vertically align with Grades PK-2 while providing advanced opportunities to enhance arts learning using a variety of media and technology.

**Grades 6-8.** Grades 6-7 indicators provide opportunities for growth in arts literacy in a progressive manner. It is recommended that Grade 8 outcomes be revised to challenge learners more in preparation for high school. In Grade 5 students are asked to “Reflect on how problem-solving drives the creative process.” And in Grade 7 they have advanced to “Discuss, debate, and negotiate possible alternative interpretations of works of art.” This shows progression in what is expected of learners over time.

**High School.** The rigor of the critique and reflection indicators advances from previous grades. Active language is clearly offered especially in areas where students are encouraged to write items and questions for a critique. While standards appear to be developmentally appropriate, it is difficult to see the changes in growth throughout the high school years. For example, how are students challenged to advance in learning from Grade 9 to Grade 10 or Grade 11? As written, these statements seem fine for a student taking only one year of art in high school but are limited in challenging students to go beyond that first year of high school study in visual arts.

***Standard 3. Invent and Discover to Create***

Use the visual arts to express, communicate, and make meaning.

**Table 26**

*CAS Visual Arts Standard 3 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES VISUAL ARTS PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Create	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	PK-2	3.00	1.89	2.28	2.39
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	3-5	2.81	2.69	2.16	2.38
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	6-8	2.81	2.69	2.16	2.38
	Standard 3 Composite Avg.	HS	2.11	2.00	2.05	2.37

**Grades PK-2.** The Grades PK-2 indicators for visual arts offer active language and are developmentally appropriate. However, they are limited in providing students with skills that can be applied in school, in careers, and in everyday life. An example from Grade 1: “Choose art media to express ideas and feelings” could require a more specific application by connecting with other subjects, family, or community.

**Grades 3-5.** Grades 3-5 outcomes provide opportunities for advancement in attaining arts literacy and fluency. These outcomes address concepts that are more complex than Grades PK-2. Higher level thinking opportunities are provided. For example, “choosing and sharing” are used in Grade 1 verses “explain and demonstrate” in Grade 3 and “hypothesize” in Grade 4.

**Grades 6-8.** It is recommended that Grade 8 evidence outcomes be revised to challenge learners more in preparation for high school. Grades 6 and 7 could require more rigorous progression from grades 3-5.

**High School.** The CAS for Visual Arts high school standards could be stronger if revised to show growth over the high school years. It may be useful to have a separate set of content expectations for students that pursue advanced study in visual arts after their first year of instruction. For a student who takes one year, some of these outcomes are a big jump to achieve from Grade 8.

***Standard 4. Relate and Connect to Transfer***

Recognize, articulate, and validate the value of the visual arts to life-long learning and the human experience.

**Table 27**

*CAS for Visual Arts Standard 4 Composite Score Averages*

NCAS Alignment	COMPOSITE AVERAGES VISUAL ARTS PK-8	GRADE BAND	Rigor 3,2,1,0 average	Depth 3,2,1,0 average	Breadth 3,2,1,0 average	Coherence 3,2,1,0 average
Connect	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	PK-2	2.62	2.29	2.81	2.70
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	3-5	2.71	2.43	2.57	2.64
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	6-8	2.54	2.32	2.26	2.42
	Standard 4 Composite Avg.	HS	2.07	2.00	2.00	2.00

**Grades PK-2.** While the Grades PK-2 standards are age appropriate, they are limited in addressing art within and across cultures. This is especially true in kindergarten and Grade 1 indicators.

**Grades 3-5.** Evidence outcomes strengthen in Grades 3-5 when guiding students to understand the integration of art and cultural, community, and personal thoughts. Outcomes continue to address art literacy and advance growth over time.

**Grades 6-8.** Grades 6-8 show limited advancement in rigor, depth, breadth, and coherence from prior grades, specifically in the use of technology and connections to culture, career, and personal growth.

**High School.** The high school outcomes show progression from prior grades, specifically in the use of technology, media, and connections to culture, career, and personal growth. Higher level thinking is present to advance toward content mastery. The weakness falls in not being able to see advancement or progression over the high school years.

### ***Internal Review Summary***

Overall, these standards are appropriate and will be effective for advancing art literacy and fluency. Connections to other subject areas including technology and media are present. There are areas for improvement, such as ensuring that grade level expectations are developmentally appropriate and challenging. Work on the CAS for Visual Arts document does reveal a commitment to students and learning

### **External Referent Review**

For the purposes of this review, four referent standards examples were used for comparison and contrast with the Colorado Academic Standards for Visual Arts: the [Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts](#), the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards Visual and Performing Arts](#), the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS), and an international example of standards from Australia, the [New South Wales Education Standards Authority](#). Additional background information is provided below about each of these standards sets later in this report.

Elements identified for comparison between each referent example and the CAS for Visual Arts include the following items:

- purpose statement for the standards
- topical organization of the academic content areas
- standards themselves
- identification of grade levels
- grade-level expectations
- *Students Will/By End of* statements
- high school expectations
- additional features

When comparing the CAS for Visual Arts to the referent standards, the reviewers rated the latter as *Very Similar, Similar, Dissimilar, or Very Dissimilar*. The similarities and dissimilarities among the standards are described and appear as graphic organizers in the alignment study tables below.

**Table 28**

*Alignment Study for Colorado Academic Standards – Visual Arts and Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts - Visual Arts*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><u><a href="#">Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts - Visual Arts</a></u></b>
<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b>            “The Colorado Academic Standards in visual arts are the topical organization of the concepts and skills all Colorado students should know and be able to do throughout their preschool through twelfth-grade experience.”</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Purpose Statement:</i></b>            “A process that guides educators in providing a unified quality arts education for students in Pre-K through High School.” (Landing page of the standards website)</p>
<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b>            The CAS for Visual Arts document is organized around four standards and ten grade levels for Grades PreK-8 expectations with one level at the high school.</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>The topical organization of an academic content area:</i></b>            The Delaware Standards for Visual Arts document is organized around four artistic processes and eleven anchor standards.</p>
<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b>            Observe and Learn to Comprehend            Envision and Critique to Reflect            Invent and Discover to Create            Relate and Connect to Transfer</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Standards:</i></b>            Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work            Organize and develop artistic ideas and work            Refine and complete artistic work            Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation</p>
<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b>            Ten grade level expectations are identified, including Grades PreK-8 and one at the high school level.</p>	<p><b><i>Dissimilar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Grade Levels Identified:</i></b>            Grades PK-12 are identified, with high school divided into three levels: Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced.</p>
<p><b><i>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</i></b>            Expectations for growth toward what a student should know and do are present at most grade levels and indicate a student is making progress toward being ready for graduation.</p>	<p><b><i>Similar</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Outcomes:</i></b>            Discipline-specific, grade-by-grade articulations of student achievement in art literacy are provided in Grades PK-8 as well as three proficiency levels in high school (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced).</p>

<b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> Students will statements are present but not always measurable.	<b>Dissimilar</b>	<b>Indicators:</b> Delaware utilizes NCAS performance standards associated with the anchor standards.
<b>High School Expectations:</b> Grade level expectations are present and clear.	<b>Similar</b>	<b>High School Expectations:</b> The Delaware Visual Arts standards have high school proficiencies (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced).
<b>Additional Feature:</b> The CAS for Visual Arts offers Inquiry Questions and Learning Experiences and Transfer resources.	<b>Dissimilar</b>	<b>Additional Feature:</b> The Delaware standards offer Student <i>I Can</i> statements, links to Model Cornerstone Assessments and student artwork samples, and “Standards “at a Glance” (the ability to view the entire Grades PK-12 progression of each standard on one sheet.)

**Table 29**

*Alignment Study for Colorado Academic Standards – Visual Arts and New Jersey Student Learning Standards Visual and Performing Arts – Visual Art*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><a href="#">New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Visual and Performing Arts - Visual Arts</a></b>
<b>Purpose Statement:</b> “The Colorado Academic Standards in Visual Arts are the topical organization of the concepts and skills all Colorado students should know and be able to do throughout their preschool through twelfth-grade experience.”	<b>Similar</b>	<b>Purpose Statement:</b> To promote lifelong artistic literacy and fluency.
<b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> The CAS for Visual Arts document is organized around four standards and ten grade level PreK-8 expectations and one level at the high school.	<b>Similar</b>	<b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> The New Jersey Standards for Visual Arts document is organized around four artistic processes and eleven anchor standards.
<b>Standards:</b> Observe and Learn to Comprehend Envision and Critique to Reflect Invent and Discover to Create Relate and Connect to Transfer	<b>Dissimilar</b>	<b>Standards:</b> Although there are many more standards in the New Jersey visual art standards, when examined at the next granular level, they align well with those of the CAS for Visual Arts.

<b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Indicators expressed by these statements are present but not always measurable.	<b>Dissimilar</b>	<b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Grades PK-12 are identified, with high school divided into three levels: Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced.
<b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Expectations for growth toward what a student should know and do are present at most grade levels and indicate a student is making progress toward being ready for graduation.	<b>Similar</b>	<b>Outcomes:</b> Discipline-specific, grade-by-grade articulations of student achievement in art literacy are provided in Grades PK-8 and at three proficiency levels in high school (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced).
<b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> Indicators expressed by these statements are present but not always measurable.	<b>Similar</b>	<b>Indicators:</b> Strong, concise actionable statements are attached to each grade/proficiency benchmark.
<b>High School Expectations:</b> The CAS for Visual Arts presents clear expectations for students who graduate.	<b>Similar</b>	<b>High School Expectations:</b> The New Jersey standards provide clear expectations as to what all students shall, in at least one area of specialization, be able to know and do by graduation from high school.
<b>Additional Feature:</b> The CAS for Visual Arts offers Inquiry Questions and Learning Experiences and Transfer resources.	<b>Similar</b>	<b>Additional Feature:</b> The New Jersey standards provide a customizable workbook, the ability to view the entire Grades PK-12 progression of each standard on one sheet, and the Arts and Social Emotional Learning Matrix.

**Table 30**

*Alignment Study for Colorado Academic Standards – Visual Arts and New South Wales Education Standards Authority- Visual Arts*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b><a href="#">New South Wales Arts Education Standards Authority - Visual Arts</a></b>
<b>Purpose Statement:</b> “The Colorado Academic Standards in Visual Arts are the topical organization of the concepts and skills all Colorado students should know and be able to do throughout their preschool through twelfth-grade experience.	<b>Dissimilar</b>	<b>Purpose Statement:</b> The complete set of NSW visual arts standards lacks any unifying purpose statement.



<p><b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> The CAS for Visual Arts document is organized around four standards and eight grade level expectations.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> Six core standards spread out over six stages (i.e., levels of learning). Not every standard appears at each stage.</p>
<p><b>Standards:</b> Observe and Learn to Comprehend Envision and Critique to Reflect Invent and Discover to Create Relate and Connect to Transfer</p>	<p><i>Dissimilar</i></p>	<p><b>Standards:</b> Performance standards are provided for the following overarching standards: Stages 1-3: Making and Appreciating Stages 4-6: Artmaking and Critical and Historical Studies Stage 6: Artmaking and Art Criticism and Art History</p>
<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Ten grade level expectations are identified, including Grades PreK-8 and one at the high school level.</p>	<p><i>Dissimilar</i></p>	<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Grade levels are identified as Stages. Stages 1-3 are the equivalent of Grades K-6, Stages 4-5 are the equivalent of Grades 7-10, and Stage 6 is the equivalent of Grades 11-12.</p>
<p><b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Expectations for growth toward what a student should know and do are present at most grade levels and indicate a student is making progress toward being ready for graduation.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b> Growth toward what is expected is present and the performance standards translate the overarching standards for each stage into specific, measurable learning goals.</p>
<p><b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> <i>Students Can</i> statements are provided.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>Indicators:</b> Multiple performance standards are provided for each overarching standard at each stage. These performance standards are written as actionable tasks that begin with “Students can...: or “Students will...” They serve as indicators of expected achievement at each stage.</p>
<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> The CAS for Visual Art offer clear expectations for students who graduate. However, it is difficult to measure growth over the four years of high school.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> Highlighted achievements are provided which students are required to reach in Early Stage 1 through Stage 5 to be prepared for Stage 6 (high school). Within the text for Stage 6, there are well-articulated expectations for graduates.</p>
<p><b>Additional Feature:</b> The CAS for Visual Arts offers Inquiry Questions and Learning Experiences and Transfer resources.</p>	<p><i>Dissimilar</i></p>	<p><b>Additional Feature:</b> Sample curricula are provided, including templates. Also, sample assessments and associated criteria are included, including templates.</p>

**Table 31**

*Alignment Study for Colorado Academic Standards – Visual Arts and National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts*

<b>Colorado Academic Standards</b>	<b>Alignment</b>	<b>National Core Arts Standards Visual Arts</b>
<p><b>Purpose Statement:</b> “The Colorado Academic Standards in Visual Arts are the topical organization of the concepts and skills all Colorado students should know and be able to do throughout their preschool through twelfth-grade experience.”</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>Purpose Statement:</b> “A process that guides educators in providing a unified quality arts education for students in Pre-K through high school.” (From the ‘Learn More’ link on the landing page.)</p>
<p><b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> The CAS for Visual Arts document is organized around four standards and eight grade level expectations.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>The topical organization of an academic content area:</b> The NCAS for Visual Arts document is organized around four artistic processes and eleven anchor standards.</p>
<p><b>Standards:</b> Observe and Learn to Comprehend Envision and Critique to Reflect Invent and Discover to Create Relate and Connect to Transfer</p>	<p><i>Dissimilar</i></p>	<p><b>Standards:</b> NCAS offers eleven anchor standards supported by multiple performance standards.</p>
<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Ten grade level expectations are identified, including Grades PreK-8 with one at the high school level.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>Grade Levels Identified:</b> Grades PK-12 are identified, with high school divided into three levels: Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced.</p>
<p><b>GLE-Grade Level Expectations:</b> Expectations for growth toward what a student should know and do are present at most grade levels and indicate a student is making progress toward being ready for graduation.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b> Discipline-specific, grade-by-grade articulations of student achievement in art literacy are provided in Grades PK-8 and at three proficiency levels in high school: Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced.</p>
<p><b>Students Will/By End of Statements:</b> These statements indicate that a student is meeting an expectation at the mastery level.</p>	<p><i>Dissimilar</i></p>	<p><b>Indicators:</b> The performance standards associated with the anchor standards are intended to illustrate the type of evidence and methodology needed to show attainment of desired learning.</p>
<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> The CAS for Visual Arts present clear expectations for students who graduate.</p>	<p><i>Similar</i></p>	<p><b>High School Expectations:</b> The NCAS have individual grade level proficiencies for Grades PK-8 with three</p>

However, it is difficult to measure growth over the four years of high school.		high school proficiency levels (Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced).
<b><i>Additional Feature:</i></b> The CAS for Visual Arts offers Inquiry Questions and Learning Experiences and Transfer resources.	<b><i>Similar</i></b>	<b><i>Additional Feature:</i></b> The NCAS offers Model Cornerstone Assessments, student artwork samples, and “Standards at a Glance” (the ability to view the entire PK-12 progression of each standard on one sheet).

## Summary

Overall, the CAS for Visual Arts are appropriate and effective for advancing art literacy and fluency. Connections to other subject areas including technology are present, with infrequent connections to media arts. While there are areas for improvement, such as ensuring all standards and statements are measurable and challenging for learners, the evidence outcomes reveal a commitment to students and learning. Recommendations are provided throughout this review. It is recommended that all standard statements are written as measurable statements rather than fact-based comments. It would be helpful to divide high school into two or three levels rather than provide only one level of high school standards.

## Other Educational Factors

Media Arts are woven into the standards throughout, especially starting in Grade 3. For example, in Grade 6, in the Invent and Discover to Create standard, using a wide variety of media is mentioned.

## Recommendations

Recommendations include ensuring that all standard statements are written as measurable statements rather than fact-based comments. It is also recommended that high school be divided into two or three levels rather than one. By doing this, growth over time can be measured. Finally, it is suggested that evidence outcomes be written to show a progressive sequence to build learner knowledge and skills. This would allow for a systematic, intentional progression of learning that builds on previous standards, providing students with a logical pathway for learning.

## **External Referents**

Resources gathered for this report beyond the Colorado foundational arts standards documents includes two state standard sets (Delaware, New Jersey) and one national standard set (National Core Arts Standard) and one international referent (New South Wales). The decision to utilize Delaware and New Jersey is based on the timeliness of these referent examples. The choice of the national examples offers a broadened perspective of standard choices for arts education.

### ***Framework Comparison between the State Standards of Delaware and New Jersey***

The states of Delaware and New Jersey adapted the NCAS in March 2016 and June 2020 respectively. The processes by which these standards were embraced involved the engagement of teacher leaders who reviewed and revised the NCAS. Delaware teachers worked within a state defined process to approve courses of study, whereas New Jersey also developed a matrix between the arts standards and social emotional learning competencies, linked by common essential questions and enduring understandings to support intentional implementation of arts integrated SEL teaching and learning. Moreover, in New Jersey there were significant refinements to the NCAS dance standards that demand greater rigor and are more developmentally appropriate. Two of the team members that reviewed and revised the latest (2020) iteration of New Jersey Student Learning Standards were part of the NCAS writing team for dance. While similar in nature, these refinements of standards in New Jersey and Delaware reflect differences in state policy and levels of local level decision making.

Two other reasons for the use of New Jersey and Delaware standards as referent examples include their use of backward design. (Grant Wiggins resided in New Jersey and his colleague and thought partner, Jay McTighe and his wife reside in Delaware. The Delaware and New Jersey Departments of Education and many schools in New Jersey and Delaware have long histories with Wiggins and McTighe, who were pioneers in the field of backwards design). In addition, New Jersey is at the forefront of a set of social emotional learning standards aligned to each arts area, which is founded in research from Dr. Maurice Elias, Director of Rutgers University Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab, and Dr. Scott Edgar of Lakeland College in Illinois, among other scholars.

The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) provided some flexibility to states for either adopting or adapting the standards. NCCAS defined an adaptation as changes that altered the original standards by more than 15%. An adoption of the standards meant that the state altered less than 15% of the original NCAS document.

### ***Background of Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts***

Delaware was among the referent states for NCAS and was the eighth state to adopt the National Core Arts Standards. The adoption of Media Arts was deferred until such time as there was an infrastructure to support robust implementation. Adoption was by the State Board of Education in March 2016. Following adoption, Delaware arts educators created *I CAN Statements* (i.e., standards clarification in student friendly language that will serve to support classroom level learning progressions).

### ***Background of New Jersey Visual and Performing Arts Standards***

New Jersey was also one of the referent states for the development of the NCAS. A process of adaptation was required because more than 15% of the NCAS standards were modified. New Jersey teachers met, under the direction of the New Jersey Department of Education, to make recommendations for modification prior to formal approval by the State Board of Education in June 2020.

### ***Background of National Core Arts Standards***

*The standards movement in the United States emerged with the 1994 passage of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Title II of that act established a National Education Standards and Improvement Council, which was charged with finding appropriate organizations to write standards. There were three goals for the standards development process: (1) to ensure that the standards reflect the best ideas in education, both in the United States and internationally; (2) to ensure that they reflected the best knowledge about teaching and learning, and (3) to ensure that they had been developed through a broad-based, open process. The standards themselves were to define what students should “know and be able to do” to the end that “all students learn to use their minds well, so that they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation’s modern economy.”*

*While the arts were not initially included as a core content area in Goals 2000, they did eventually become part of the legislation and were the first academic subject to successfully write standards under that law (though they were preceded by and profited from standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics). Following the general idea of developing “voluntary” standards for “what students should know and be able to do,” and in anticipation of the passage of the act, a consortium of organizations representing teachers of dance, music, Drama-Theatre, and the visual arts approached the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1992 for a grant to move forward in this area.*

*The group completed its work and released the National Standards for Arts Education in 1994, the same year the Goals 2000 Act was enacted. The 1994*

*standards established achievement expectations for students at the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade. The introduction to the standards set out the following purposes for that document:*

*Standards for arts education are important for two fundamental reasons.*

*First, they help define what a good education in the arts should provide: a thorough grounding in a basic body of knowledge and the skills required both to make sense and to make use of each of the arts discipline—including the intellectual tools to make qualitative judgments about artistic products and expression.*

*Second, when states and school districts adopt the standards, they are taking a stand for rigor, informed by a clear intent. A set of standards for arts education says, in effect, “An education in the arts means that students should know what is spelled out here, reach specified levels of attainment, and do both at defined points in their education.”*

*Those standards, accepted by then- Secretary of Education Richard Riley, were highly influential. It is fair to say that they have helped shape curricula across the United States, through adoption of state standards, in the development of scope-and-sequence documents at the local education agency level, and by challenging individual arts educators to reflect on their practices.*

*The voluntary National Core Arts Standards are a re-imagining of the 1994 National Standards for Arts Education, and more recently, the 2005 Standards for Learning and Teaching Dance in the Arts. These standards are to guide arts curriculum, instruction, and assessment in America’s schools. Toward that end, they emphasize the process-oriented nature of the arts and arts learning that guide the continuous and systematic operations of instructional improvement by:*

- *Defining artistic literacy through a set of overarching Philosophical Foundations and Lifelong Goals that clarify long-term expectations for arts learning.*
- *Placing Artistic Processes and Anchor Standards at the forefront of the work.*
- *Identifying Creative Practices as the bridge for the application of the Artistic Processes across all learning.*
- *Specifying Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions that provide conceptual throughlines and articulate value and meaning within and across the arts discipline.*
- *Providing Model Cornerstone Assessments of student learning aligned to the Artistic Processes.*

*The National Core Arts Standards exist in a web-based platform, designed to allow flexible sorting and organizing to meet individual teacher and local*

*district needs. The web-based platform allows for examples of student work to be linked directly to each of the standards. Over time, as teachers implement the standards and capture student work based on the model cornerstone assessments, this repository of representative student work near standard, at standard, and above standard will grow.*

*The format and design of this new set of standards repositions the way in which the field interacts with standards and assessments. No longer do we talk about standards as lists of what students should know and be able to do. Rather, we talk about standards as measurable and attainable learning events based on artistic goals.*

*A backwards design approach was selected as a clear and cogent model for building standards. The Understanding by Design (UbD) Framework®, co-created by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins, assists educators in first identifying important outcomes of learning, then determining acceptable evidence of attainment, and finally designing the best path for achieving those desired results. National Core Arts Standards have been developed using the UbD framework as a major design driver. Jay McTighe, along with visual arts educator Daisy McTighe, provided early guidance to standards writing chairs as well as additional assistance on model cornerstone assessments.*

*National Core Arts Standards were also developed with the full knowledge of current trends in the field of public education, including— notably—the Common Core State Standards. Educators familiar with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, in particular, found similarities in structure that aided in the smooth implementation of the National Core Arts Standards. Simultaneously, those same educators found differences in content and presentation that stem from the unique nature and traditions of each art form. The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards is not associated with the Common Core State Standards project, although it did review CCSS concepts and design.*

*The National Core Arts Standards are built around evidence—not just evidence of student learning, but also research-based discoveries that helped writers and reviewers determine best-practice methods for the presentation of the standards as well as their content. In addition to research compiled by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) member organizations, the standards writers have benefited from research efforts of the College Board. 3 (The College Board’s research on behalf of NCCAS is detailed in the Research-based Discoveries section of the NCCAS website <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/> ) Additional valuable research on arts education may be found in sources including ArtsEdSearch.*

*The structure of the new arts standards suggests that they are learning events, progressing across grades and levels to create a sequential, standards-based*

*approach to arts education. However, they also assume that learning does not happen out of context. Quality learning requires opportunity-to-learn conditions that create a rigorous and supportive learning environment. Standards are only one building block of quality arts education. ([National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework for Arts Learning](#), pp. 4-7)*

### ***Background of New South Wales Creative Arts Stages of Learning Expectations***

The New South Wales Creative Arts Stages of Learning Expectations ([Key Learning Areas](#)) were chosen as an international referent example for the review. The Stages of Learning Expectations provide discipline-based knowledge and fundamental skills with critical capabilities aligned to the world of work. Creative Arts Stages describe complex skills and shape inquiry and reflection in instruction.



## Appendix A

### Content Reviewer Biographies

#### **Project Co-Lead Julie A. Palkowski, PhD**

**Dr. Julie A. Palkowski** has worked in education for more than 30 years and currently is a music educator and higher education consultant. She supported the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as the Arts and Creativity Education Consultant for nine years, having also been an advisory member of various boards including the Wisconsin School Music Association, Wisconsin Art Education Association, the Alliance for Wisconsin Theatre Education, and the Wisconsin Dance Council. Dr. Palkowski has previously been an arts administrator with school districts in Rockford, Illinois, and Madison, Wisconsin. Julie has facilitated arts education sessions focused on pedagogy, program development and promotion, disciplinary literacy, data, and technology throughout Wisconsin. Publications include articles in statewide arts magazines, online resource archives for educators, and podcasts for the State of Wisconsin and SEADAE.

Prior to these positions and activities, Dr. Palkowski worked as a Title I Instructional Supervisor, a K4-8th Grade Principal, Music Teacher, and Summer Enrichment Coordinator. She has led multiple standards reviews as a fine arts administrator with two school districts, as a principal, and more recently with the state of Wisconsin for the arts areas of dance, music, theatre, and art. Additional research experiences include serving as a doctoral chair and mentor for graduate and doctoral students and as an external research team member for the Madison Metropolitan School District. She served as a reviewer for the Nebraska art Standards, Minnesota and Colorado music standards, and led a music curriculum team in Chicago Public Schools. She has worked as a collaborator to the NCAS Dance Leadership Writing Team. National work includes her service as President of SEADAE, where she supported the Arts Education Data Project as a co-chair, served as an active member to the National Coalition of Core Arts Standards, and as a session panelist and reviewer for organizations such as the Arts Education Partnership and National Endowment for the Arts.

#### **Project Co-Lead Dale Schmid, Ed.D.**

**Dr. Dale Schmid** is an independent consultant and former Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator for the New Jersey Department of Education (1999 to 2021). He is a recognized authority on student learning standards, standards-based assessment, and programmatic evaluation. As one of approximately 55 state arts education directors throughout the nation, he helped shape state and national standards-based arts education policy and practice and oversaw the review and revision of every set of New Jersey Student Learning Standards in the Visual and Performing Arts since their inception. He is a contributing author to the 2015 NCAS as well as the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) *Standards for Learning and Teaching Dance in the Arts: Ages 5-18* in 2005 & 2011; a co-author of NDEO's *Professional Teaching Standards for Dance in Arts Education*, 2005 & 2011, and the NDEO *Standards for a K-12 Model Program: Opportunities to Learn in Dance Arts Education* (2005 & 2011).

Dr. Schmid has held numerous state and national leadership roles including SEADAE; President of the National Dance Education Organization; the Executive Steering Committees of the national Arts Education Partnership; the States Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards/Arts Education Consortium; the Governance and Advisory Committees of Arts Ed NJ, and the NJN Public Broadcasting Authority, among others. He is a longstanding member of the National Arts Education Policy Working Group, facilitated by the Americans for the Arts and the League of American Orchestras, and has served on the Arts Education Partnership Advisory Panel, operated under the aegis of the Education Commission on the States since 2015. He was also part of the development team (2015-202) that wrote the College Board, Pre-AP Arts Curriculum. Additionally, Dr. Schmid is co-facilitator of the NCCAS and senior advisor to Dance Entry Level Teacher Assessment (DELTA) initiative; a national endeavor to codify dance teacher training and support pedagogic content knowledge in dance education. Starting in September 2021, Dr. Schmid will be serving as a Senior Fellow for the Arnholdt Institute for Dance Education Research, Policy and Leadership, and (Adjunct) Professor of Practice, for the EdD Dance Education Program at Columbia University, Teachers College, housed within the Department of Arts and Humanities. Schmid holds a Doctorate in Educational and Organizational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania with a dissertation in the field of psychometrics; an M.Ed. from Temple University; and undergraduate degrees in Speech and Theatre, and Health & Physical Education from Bemidji State University. He also spent several decades on the national touring circuit as a dancer, actor, and musician.

#### **Dance Reviewer Sayward Grindley, M.F.A.**

Sayward Grindley is the Dance and Visual Arts Consultant at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). She has been on the dance faculty at Elon University, Meredith College, East Carolina University, and Appalachian State University. At East Carolina University, she was the Interim Dance Education coordinator overseeing the student teaching and Grades K-12 certification program. She has guest taught at High Point University, Jacksonville University, University of North Carolina-Greensboro's master's in dance education program, University of South Carolina, Tulsa Ballet, Florida Dance Festival, American College Dance Festival, American Dance Festival, and presented at several North Carolina Dance Educator Organization conferences. Ms. Grindley was previously the Education Director at Sarasota Ballet and Carolina Ballet and danced and toured professionally with Sarasota Contemporary Dance. She taught middle and high school dance in the public schools in Florida and was on the state committee to write the Grades K-12 Sunshine State Standards for Dance in 2010. Sayward has been an adjudicator for the high school dance performance assessments in both Florida and NC, as well as several prestigious arts scholarship programs. She holds a Master of Fine Arts in Choreography from Jacksonville University-White Oak and a dual Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Performance and Dance Education with Grades K-12 certification from East Carolina University.

#### **Music Reviewer Jason Anderson, M.M**

Jason Anderson currently serves as the Visual and Performing Arts Content Specialist at the Maine Department of Education (MDOE). Prior to joining the MDOE, Jason spent fourteen

years teaching vocal and classroom music and coaching musical theatre, plays, and jazz choirs in Maine and Vermont. In the past year, Jason coordinated all arts education integrations through the MDOE's MOOSE (Maine's Online Opportunities for Sustained Education) platform, a collection of asynchronous interdisciplinary learning modules for all students in grades K-12. Jason's other duties at the MDOE include coordinating and facilitating professional learning to arts educators, as well as administering the Maine Kids Rock program (a statewide initiative in collaboration with Little Kids Rock). He earned a Bachelor of Music Education and a Master of Music in Choral Conducting at the University of Maine, did post-graduate study in music education at the Conservatory at Shenandoah University and in curriculum and instruction and educational leadership with Southern New Hampshire University. He currently serves as Vice President of the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE).

#### **Drama and Theatre Arts Reviewer Emily Atkinson, M.A.Ed.**

Emily Atkinson is a fine arts administrator with 26 years of educational and non-profit professional experience. She holds a Master's in Art Education from Texas Tech University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Texas State University. Over the course of her career, she has taught high school and middle school art in Texas and for the Department of Defense Education Activity in Japan; been the campus Student Learning Objectives Facilitator and the Continuous School Improvement Chair; taught Integrating Fine Arts in the Elementary Classroom for Concordia University Texas; been the Fine Arts Facilitator for Federal Way Public Schools in Washington state; and was the Arts Enrichment and Outreach Lead for Holden Village, a non-profit organization. She is currently the Fine Arts Instructional Systems Specialist for the Department of Defense Education Activity where she is responsible for visual art and drama curriculum and instruction. One facet of her previous and current jobs has been implementing the NCAS in Music, Drama, and Visual Art, including creating and leading professional development and developing curriculum.

She has served on both a curriculum writer's cadre and an assessment creation team for Austin Independent School District's Fine Arts; spent five years on the Texas Art Education Association's Visual Arts Scholastic Event (TAEA VASE) Blue Ribbon (State Advisory) Committee; co-chaired the Region XX TAEA VASE Event for four years; was a juror for TAEA VASE and Jr VASE for many years; and was the Juror Foreman for Region XIII South Jr VASE for 3 years.

She is a member of SEADAE, National Art Educators Association, National Association for Music Education, and the Educational Theatre Association. She was the recipient of both the Local (San Antonio) and the Texas District 20 VFW Teacher of the Year. She is a working artist, with previous work in shows in Tokyo, Cascades National Park, Texas, and Washington.

#### **Visual Arts Review Joyce Huser, M.Ed.**

Joyce Huser is the Fine Arts Education Consultant for the Kansas State Department of Education. She provides state and national educational guidance and resources for diverse arts, arts education, and general education groups regarding leadership in developing curricular standards, curriculum design, instruction, and program planning. She is a two-time National

Board-Certified teacher in Early/Middle Childhood Art and has been an adjunct instructor for both the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas, and Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. She was a high school, middle, and elementary art teacher for twenty years in various school districts in Wisconsin and Kansas, and director of the Valley Park Elementary Cultural Arts Program in Overland Park, Kansas for six years. She has been a member of and served various roles in professional associations such as SEADAE, Arts Education Partnership, NAEA, National Association of State Directors of Art Education, NAFME, Kansas Music Educators Association, Kansas Art Education Association, and others. Her work has included writing national course code descriptors for the visual arts with direction from National Center for Education Statistics (NCES); assisting in the development of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Arts Skills Map in cooperation with The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (P21); and writing the NCAS for Visual Arts through the NCCAS. She has written various articles for state and national publications.

During her professional career, Ms. Huser has been awarded various state, regional, and national awards including the Kansas and National Outstanding Elementary Art Educator of the Year award and the Kansas Outstanding Supervision and Administrator of the Year awards. She is Past President of SEADAE and has recently written resources for Middle East/North African Curriculum Schools (MENA). As a SEADAE member she has served as Regional Representative, President Elect, President, and Past President while also serving on various committees and conference lead positions.

#### **Editor Lana Hallmark, M.Ed.**

Lana Hallmark recently retired as the Fine Arts Program Advisor for the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) In her nine years in that position, Ms. Hallmark facilitated the revision of Arkansas Fine Arts Academic Standards in music, dance, visual art, and theatre in both 2014 and 2020. Her duties also included developing professional development to support implementation of the Arkansas standards and other training programs for fine arts instructors across the state. She worked to build a fine arts and arts education advocacy infrastructure to benefit all of Arkansas's public-school students. Ms. Hallmark served as part of the Americans for the Arts State Policy Pilot Program, was a founding board member of Arkansans for the Arts and served on the Arkansas Community Theatre Association board of directors.

Prior to her tenure at DESE, Ms. Hallmark earned a B.A. in Theatre Arts from Hendrix College and a M.Ed. in Communication from Harding University. She taught high school theatre, directed shows, coached competitive forensics, and taught English for twenty years. In 1999, she left the classroom and founded Center on the Square, a non-profit community performing arts center, that is currently in its 22<sup>nd</sup> season. She served as executive and artistic director there for thirteen years before returning to education as the fine arts advisor at DESE. She has written lifestyle columns and feature stories for the Searcy Daily Citizen and the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, as well as spending a year as a grant writer for Southern Bancorp. Since her retirement, Ms. Hallmark has stayed close to arts education, forming a consulting service known as Lana Hallmark CAN (Consulting for Arts Nonprofits). She remains active in community theatre as an actor and director.

## Appendix B

### Resources

- Achieve: <http://www.achieve.org/files/IntELABrief.pdf>
- American Educational Research Association Code of Ethics
- Australian Standards: <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/australian-curriculum/k-12-arts.html>
- Center for Arts Education and Social Emotional Learning - Arts Education and Social Emotional Learning Framework - [SELarts.org](http://SELarts.org)
- College Board: <http://www.ed.gov/race-top/district-competition/definitions>
- Delaware Standards for Visual and Performing Arts -
  - Home page- <https://www.deartsstandards.org/>
  - I Can Statements- <https://www.deartsstandards.org/content/i-can-statements-create>
- Ed Glossary: <http://edglossary.org/learning-standards/>
- International Standards for Arts Education by College Board 2013 Review: [http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/College%20Board%20Research%20-%20International%20Standards\\_0.pdf](http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/College%20Board%20Research%20-%20International%20Standards_0.pdf)
- National Core Arts Standards Conceptual Framework- [https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/NCCAS%20%20Conceptual%20Framework\\_0.pdf](https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/NCCAS%20%20Conceptual%20Framework_0.pdf)
  - Home page - <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>
- New Jersey Student Learning Standards Visual and Performing Arts- <https://njartsstandards.org/>
- New South Wales Creative Arts Stages of Learning Expectations
  - Home page- <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/creative-arts/early-stage-1-to-stage-3/arts-across-the-curriculum>
  - Key Learning Areas- <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/creative-arts>
  - Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus: <http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/go/creative-arts>
- WestEd Standards: [https://www.wested.org/area\\_of\\_work/standards-assessment-accountability/](https://www.wested.org/area_of_work/standards-assessment-accountability/)
- U.S. Education Definitions: <http://www.ed.gov/race-top/district-competition/definitions>

## Appendix C

### Data Review Sheets

Colorado Standards Data Review Sheets - Dance

[Dance Standards Review Data](#)

[Composite Averages Dance](#)

Colorado Standards Data Review Sheets - Drama - Theatre

[Drama - Theatre Standards Review Data](#)

[Composite Averages Drama - Theatre](#)

Colorado Standards Data Review Sheets - Music

[Music Standards Review Data](#)

[Composite Averages Music](#)

Colorado Standards Data Review Sheets - Visual Arts

[Visual Arts Standards Review Data](#)

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## Appendix E

### Glossary

The terms identified below were either constructed by the review team, adapted by the sources indicated, or identified with their originating sources. The keywords below offer a deeper understanding of the main concepts which shape the work of the review team and their lens for the standards being investigated. Another resource providing the team definitions included the **NCAS Music Glossary**-

<http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/NCCAS%20GLOSSARY%20for%20Music%20Standards%201%20column.pdf>.

**Anchor standards** - Anchor standards describe the general knowledge and skill that teachers expect students to demonstrate throughout their education in the arts. These anchor standards are parallel across arts disciplines and grade levels and serve as the tangible educational expression of artistic literacy. (NCCAS)

**Breadth** -The term breadth of standards is being defined for the purposes of this review to mean a coherently scaffolded and sequenced set of standards, in which essential content is explored through a wide array of interrelated ideas, facts, and perspectives.

**Coherence** - Learning standards can promote alignment (i.e., greater academic and instructional coherence) within a school or education system. Because standards are carefully mapped out and sequenced, they can help schools and teachers avoid redundancy or unnecessary repetition, while also creating a progression of instruction in which each lesson builds on previous lessons, moving students from simpler concepts to more complex and challenging concepts, from lower-level thinking to higher-level thinking, or from less-sophisticated skills to more-sophisticated skills as they progress through their education. For a related discussion, see coherent curriculum. <http://edglossary.org/learning-standards/>

### Colorado Academic Standards - Music

- **Expression of Music** -The expression of music is the demonstration of human thought and emotion through the medium of performance, which is a product of knowledge and skills gained in the study of music.
- **Creation of Music** - The creation of music is the demonstration of learned skills in the composition, improvisation, and arranging of music. Creating music involves writing music, fashioning new music from an existing piece of music, or forming an entirely new piece of music.
- **Theory of Music** - The theory of music is the understanding of the distinctive language, conventions, mechanics, and structure of organized sound. Investigation of music theory allows for a more complete understanding of all aspects of the musical process, including musical performance and composition.
- **Aesthetic Valuation of Music** - The value of music focuses on the knowledge needed to make an informed evaluation and to provide a well-thought-out critique about a musical piece. It also addresses the beauty, heart, and soul: the aesthetics of

music. Valuing music will permit individuals to distinguish between a scholarly and an individual judgment of music.

### **Colorado’s Description of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness**

Postsecondary and workforce readiness describes the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and to compete in the global economy. The description assumes students have developed consistent intellectual growth throughout their high school career as a result of academic work that is increasingly challenging, engaging, and coherent. Postsecondary education and workforce readiness assumes that students are ready and able to demonstrate the following without the need for remediation: Critical thinking and problem-solving; finding and using information/information technology; creativity and innovation; global and cultural awareness; civic responsibility; work ethic; personal responsibility; communication; and collaboration. (Adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education, June 2009)

**Colorado’s Description for School Readiness** - School readiness describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences, and the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students enrolled in publicly funded preschools or kindergartens. School readiness is enhanced when schools, families, and community service providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content. (Adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education, December 2008)

**Connecting** - Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context. (NCCAS)

**Creating** - Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work. (NCCAS)

**Depth** - The term depth is widely used by educators to describe robust, well-integrated understandings of fundamental concepts essential to the attainment of literacy and fluency in an arts discipline. Courses of sufficient “depth” include developmentally appropriate levels of investigation that reinforce and revisit core concepts and that provide a firm foundation for students to learn and understand more advanced concepts and transfer their knowledge in other contexts. (Adapted from College Board Science Framework)

**Inquiry Questions** – Inquiry is a multifaceted process requiring students to think and pursue understanding. Inquiry demands that students (a) engage in an active observation and questioning process; (b) investigate to gather evidence; (c) formulate explanations based on evidence; (d) communicate and justify explanations, and (e) reflect and refine ideas. Inquiry is more than hands-on activities; it requires students to cognitively wrestle with core concepts as they make sense of new ideas.

**Model Cornerstone Assessments** - The assessments bring the standards to life by illustrating the demonstrations of desired learning and the criteria by which student performances should be judged. Standards-based curriculum and associated instruction can then be designed “backward” from key assessments that reflect the desired outcomes.

They are intended to engage students in applying knowledge and skills in authentic and relevant contexts. They call for higher order thinking (e.g., evaluation) and habits of mind (e.g., persistence) in order to achieve successful results. Their authenticity and complexity are what distinguishes them from the decontextualized, selected-response items found on many tests.

**Nature of Discipline** – The unique advantage of a discipline is the perspective it gives the mind to see the world and situations differently. The characteristics and viewpoint one keeps because of mastering the grade level expectation is the nature of the discipline retained in the mind’s eye.

**Performance standards** - Performance standards are discipline-specific (dance, media arts, music, visual arts, theatre), grade-by-grade articulations of student achievement in the arts Grades PK-8 and at three proficiency levels in high school (proficient, accomplished and advanced). As such, the performance standards translate the anchor standards into specific, measurable learning goals. (NCCAS)

**Performance standards** - a task/event/performance designed to measure a student’s ability to directly demonstrate particular knowledge and skills. ([NCAS Glossary](#))

**Performing/ Producing/Presenting** - Performing (dance, music, theatre): Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation. Presenting (visual arts): Interpreting and sharing artistic work. Producing (media arts): Realizing and presenting artistic ideas and work. (NCCAS)

**Process components**- Process components are the actions artists carry out as they complete each artistic process. Students’ ability to carry out these operational verbs empowers them to work through the artistic process independently. The process components played a key role in generating enduring understandings and performance standards and serve as the action verbs that collectively build toward the artistic processes. Process components and their definitions are presented among supplemental resources. In the final presentation of standards individual arts disciplines have placed differing levels of emphasis on the process components. Music standards place process components in a central role.

**Relevance and Application** – The hallmark of learning a discipline is the ability to apply the knowledge, skills, and concepts in real-world, relevant contexts. Components of this include solving problems, developing, adapting, and refining solutions for the betterment of society. The application of a discipline, including how technology assists or accelerates the work, enables students to more fully appreciate how the mastery of the grade level expectation matters after formal schooling is complete.

**Responding** - Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning. (NCCAS)

**Rigor** - The term *rigor* is widely used by educators to describe instruction, schoolwork, learning experiences, and educational expectations that are academically, intellectually, and personally challenging. Rigorous learning experiences, for example, help students understand

knowledge and concepts that are complex, ambiguous, or contentious, and they help students acquire skills that can be applied in a variety of educational, career, and civic contexts throughout their lives. (<http://edglossary.org/rigor/>)